# A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECIES OF *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk* and *Zephaniah.*

BY
GEORGE HUTCHESON
*Minister at* EDENBURGH.

Luke 24.25. *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the Prophets have spoken.*
Ver.27. *And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.*
Act.10.43. *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*
Rom.3.21. *But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.*

*Imprimatur*, EDM. CALAMY.

The Second Edition with Amendments by the Author.

*London*, Printed for *Ralph Smith*, at the Bible in Cornhil, near the Royal Exchange, 1654.

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# *The* EPISTLE *of the* LICENCER *to the* READER.

*CHRISTIAN READER,*

THis Book which Gods providence putteth into thy hand, contains a brief Expoſition upon Six of thoſe Divine Prophecies which are called, * *Prophetæ minores*, The ſmall or leſſer Prophets; not becauſe their authority or excellency is leſſer then thoſe who are ſtiled *Prophetæ majores*, The greater Prophets: but becauſe of the *brevity and littleneſſe* of their Books, which are ſo little, that all the leſſer Prophets put together, do but contain 67 Chapters, whereas one of the greater, (*viz. Iſaiah*) conſiſteth of 66. Hence it was, that theſe Books were anciently put into one Volume, and called but *One Book*, leſt by their littleneſſe and ſmalneſſe any of them (ſaith *Calvin*) ſhould be loſt. Theſe Prophets are in number *twelve*, according to the *twelve Tribes*, to which they were ſent. Now though it cannot be denyed, but that there are very many excellent Commentaries already extant upon theſe leſſer Prophets, (which may haply deterre ſome men from buying of this;) yet I deſire ſuch to take notice,

* Ruffinus *in Præfatione in* Oſeam. *Duodecim Prophetas minores dici reſpectu quatuor majorum, puta* Iſaiæ, Jeremiæ, Ezekielis *et* Danielis, *non eò quod iis ſententiarum gravitate & rerum verborumque majeſtate cedant; ſed ob ſermones, et librorum brevitatem.*

Firſt, That ſuch is the Profundity and unconceivable Abyſſe of the *Divine Scriptures*, that they cannot be exhauſted by any Writers or Commentators whatſoever; but when men have digged all the *ſpiritual gold and ſilver* they can, out of this precious Mine, there will be enough left behind for others to gather.

Secondly, That this Reverend Author hath gone in a way unuſual, and (almoſt) untrodden, and hath a peculiar excellency in him, which others have not. For his chief ſcope is, after a ſhort and yet full Analyſis and Expoſition, to collect choice and pithy

Obſervations out of every Chapter. And in this undertaking he is very happy, and I may truly ſay, another *Mr. David Dickſon.*

Now though the work it ſelf is ſufficient to commend the Author, yet becauſe there are many in our dayes that *prize Books for their Authors ſake, not Authors for their Books ſake*; I was deſired to write ſomething to make this Reverend Miniſter known to this Nation, unto which he is altogether a ſtranger: And for this purpoſe I have received teſtimony concerning him, from thoſe whom I dare truſt, that he is a *man of ſingular parts*, and deſervedly in high eſteem in his own Country, for his *Learning*, *Godlineſſe*, *Modeſty*, *Peaceableneſſe* and *Humility*. That he was earneſtly intreated by ſome of his learned Brethren, (eſpecially thoſe in *Edenburgh*, where he is Miniſter) to make this work publick, for the good of the Churches in both Nations. The truth is, the Book it ſelf repreſents him to the world in a very *fair and beautiful Character*: For it comprehends much in a little, breathes out much of God and godlineſſe. His Obſervations are ſo excellent and ſuitable, and ſometimes ſo unexpected, and yet ſo natural, that I verily beleeve they will be very acceptable, not only to private Chriſtians, but alſo and eſpecially unto Miniſters, affording them many rare and unthought on Doctrines, for the ſpiritual edification of their Congregations. That which was ſaid of *Socrates*, *That whoſoever knew him loved him, and honoured him; and they that did not ſo, it was becauſe they did not know him*; may truly be ſaid of this Book: They that know it, wil prize it, and the Author of it; and they that do not ſo, it is becauſe they do not know it. My prayer to God ſhall be, that the learned and religious Author of this ſhort and brief Commentary upon theſe ſix Prophets, may finde ſuch good ſucceſſe of his endeavours herein, that he may be much encouraged to make a further progreſſe in this way, and other able men may be ſtirred up by his example to do the like upon other Scriptures, which no doubt will tend much to the glory of God, and the profit and edification of his people. I am

Thy Servant, in the Work of the LORD,

*Jan. the 27. 1653*

EDM: CALAMY.

TO THE
Most Noble and truly Religious LADY,

# ANNE,

## DUTCHESSE of

# HAMILTON, &c.

*Grace, Mercy, and Peace through Jesus Christ be multiplied.*

IT *is* (Madam) *the verdict, not only of the wisest of men, but of the unerring Spirit of God, concerning all things under the Sun,* Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, *Eccles.* 1. 2. *and that not only as the Creation is made subject to the vanity of corruption, because of mens sin,* Rom. 8. 20. *but chiefly in respect of men, who are not content with the lawfulnesse of things for which they are appointed, and are very good; but study to*

*place their happinesse in them, neglecting God the only fountaine of true felicity; as the creature cannot answer the expectations of such, nor satisfie their vast desires; so do they, by their way, provoke the Lord to discover unto them the folly of their choice, whether in mercy to his owne, that hee may traine them up to better things, or in justice to the wicked, who seek after no more, that they may be no better for all their endlesse endeavors, then they who voluntarily mortifie their affections to those things; and that all may see the folly and madnesse of their way, who sell their souls, and spend out their mony and strength for that which is no bread, and doth not profit nor satisfie.*

*And albeit this way of attaining felicity, hath beene essayed and not found by him, who for outward enjoyments had cause to say,* What can the man do that cometh after the King? *Eccles.* 2. 12. *And albeit experience in all ages doth discover what a sandy foundation they build upon, who seeke by these meanes to satisfie their own souls, made after the image of God; yet how few are they who will believe this truth, till they also essay it themselves?* This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings, Psal. 49. 13. *Yea, when our selves are finding this truth verified, we do hardly trust our owne eyes and senses, but are still ready to imagine that we may find it yet otherwise; or if we be put from that hope, yet oft times are we little the better, but do sit downe in bitternes, as if all felicity were lost, if we find it not where we expected it; and thus do we neglect the true remedy of our grievances, and do provoke God to* consume our dayes in vanity, and our years in trouble, *Psal.* 78. 33.

How

*How great cauſe then have wee to admire and lament the folly of the children of men, who do ſo farre miſtake, and upon their miſtake do forſake their own mercy, whereunto they are led by the diſcovering of the emptineſſe of all things beſide God? who do quarrell with the wiſe and holy diſpenſations of God, whereby a foundation might be laid for much good, if they were wiſely conſidered; when yet their quarrellings can availe or help them nothing: and who doe not improve ſuch diſpenſations for the end for which they are appointed, but either ſit downe ſtupidly under them, or grow the worſe that paines are taken on them, or at leaſt doe pine away under the puniſhment of their iniquity, and* do howle upon their beds for corne, and wine, and oyle, but return not to the moſt High? Hoſ. 7. 14. 6. *And on the other hand, we have cauſe to admire the mercie of God toward his own choſen ones, in that he will (ſo to ſay) make them happy againſt their wils, and when they would deſtroy and deceive themſelves with a vaine ſhew, he in mercy to them wil famiſh their idols, and drive them from ſnares, as he did* Lot *out of* Sodome. *And when the Lord hath dealt ſo hardly with them, as many times in their bitterneſs they want language to expreſs it, yet he wil let them ſee their miſtake, by giving them meat even out of that eater, and by ſetting them on work to mind their country more, and to* ſee the Commandments exceeding broad, when they have ſeene an end of all perfection. Pſal. 119. 96. *And he will diſcover the riches of his grace, and fulneſs of his ſpiritual comforts, by making his people bleſs him, and acknowledg the mercy of theſe diſpenſations, which ſomtimes they ſo much ſtartled at.* Pſal. 119. 71, 75.

*and causing the* voice of rejoycing and salvation, *even in the pilgrime* tabernacles of the righteous, *Psa.* 118.15.

*Herein* (Madam) *your Ladiship hath cause to observe the loving kindness of the Lord toward you, who from your tendereſt years, having been exerciſed with difficulties of ſundry kinds, and having experienced this truth of the vanity of all things; yet your Ladiſhip hath obtained mercy to be led thereby (and much more by the Law, and by the love and hope of mercy through Jeſus Chriſt) to ſeek after a more enduring ſubſtance, and after Chriſt that pearle of price, which is indeed a token for good, even in lots wherein God ſeemeth to write moſt bitter things, when they ſet hearts on work this way. And as it hath been refreſhful to ſuch of the Lords ſervants and people, as know your Ladiſhips way and exerciſe, to ſee your ſweet ſubmiſſion under the Lords hand, and your deſire and care to have afflictions rather bleſſed then removed, and to make ſure your intereſt in Chriſt, when the throng of other things might rather have put fleſh and blood to other exerciſe; ſo it hath laid a ſpecial obligation upon my ſelf (as having been a witneſs thereunto at ſeveral occaſions,) to be inſtrumental, as the Lord ſhall enable, for your Ladiſhips furtherance and encouragement therein, which together with my obligations, to make ſome acknowledgment of the many reſpects it hath pleaſed your Ladiſhip to ſhew unto me for the truths cauſe, have induced me to make bold in dedicating unto your Ladiſhip this piece, upon ſome of the Leſſer Prophets, who were the faithful Interpreters of the Law of God, applying the ſame unto the ſins of ſeveral times, and who do point out the infallible and true cauſes of ca-*

*lamities, with the use to be made thereof, and the true remedy thereof; to wit, Christ, the hope of whom to be manifested in the flesh for the Redemption of lost man, was the godlies life in these dayes, and much more ought he to be so now, when the substance is come, and that abundance of grace and truth treasured up in him is brought to light by the Gospel. If these my weak endeavours may prove serviceable to any of the Lords people in their exercises and journey toward Heaven, and in special to your Ladiship, that shall be more then abundant recompence unto*]

(*MADAM*)

Your Ladiships obliged Servant in the Gospel,

GEORGE HUTCHESON.

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To

# To The READER.

*Christian Reader,*

I Do here present thee with an Exposition of some of the lesser Prophets; concerning which, and my undertaking thereof, I do in the entry give this briefe account.

As I have looked upon a short Exposition of holy Scripture joyned with the principal doctrines flowing therefrom, after the mould of the Reverend Mr. *David Dickson*, his late peece upon *Matthew*, as a special means (through Gods blessing) for promoting of truth and piety, and for preventing of errours; so I little thought to have undertaken any such thing my self, when so many godly, able, and experienced Ministers of the Gospel, did not, (for reasons knowne to themselves) put hand to it: But being some yeers ago seriously invited with divers others, by the Reverend Author of that Exposition on *Matthew*, to concur with him in prosecuting that purpose which he had begun, and hath since made further progress into, upon the booke of Psalmes; I did then essay some of these Prophets, being at that time recommended unto me, and of late at his desire (living now through Gods providence in one City) I have looked upon them over again, and adventured to present these to publick view, if so be it may invite others who have more ability and leisure, to mind and help forward such a work upon the whole Bible: which is a study (beside the profit the Church of God might reape thereby) I am confident, wil richly recompence the undertakers in their own bosome by many advantages.

As this recommendation did determine me to the choice of these Prophets in this undertaking: so this narration may shorten my account concerning the mould of this piece; seeing I have conformed my self (so far as my weakness could reach, or the nature of the subject, being oftentimes very dark and obscure, would admit)

to

to the mould followed in the Expoſition upon *Matthew* formerly mentioned. I have found it neceſſary (beſide a ſhort ſumme of each Chapter in the entrie) to premit ſome ſhort Expoſition of the words before the doctrines, which is inlarged, when neede is, in clearing the deductions of each Doctrine. In the Expoſition I have pointed, upon occaſion, at other Scriptures helping to cleare the place; but for the Doctrines, I did not ſet my ſelfe to bring Scripture confirming them, it being my deſire that no more be admitted, or received here, then ſuch as clearly flow from the text in hand; only where a paſſage occured to memory, for illuſtrat i-on of the Doctrine, I have added it, as affording further ground of meditation to the Reader, if he pleaſe. It cannot be avoided in a piece of ſo many Doctrines, and on divers ſubjects, but the ſame Doctrines, at leaſt for ſubſtance, wil occur often; but the Reader may conſider, that every time it occurreth, it is confirmed of new, from a new ground; and Gods inculcating of truths often calls on us to heare, and conſider them much. If any man thinks the doctrines ſometimes more prolixe, he would conſider, that in this ſort of writing it is required to ſay much in little bounds, that ſometimes two truths flowing from one ground, wil ſpeak more fully being conjoyned, then if every one of them were made a doctrine alone; & that ſome doctrines, nakedly propounded, could not ſatisfie, unleſſe they were either limited, or cleered a little.

As the Doctrines wil be found (I hope) to ariſe naturally from the text explained: ſo in expoſition I have ſtudied to keepe by the rule of faith, and ſet downe that Expoſition which is moſt agreeable to the context it ſelfe: and where diverſity of interpretations could agree together, as tending to one ſcope, I have conjoyned them; and but ſeldome held forth divers and different interpretations of one place, where there was no ſuch affinity betwixt them. There is onely one thing of which I would premoniſh thee in a word, and that is concerning ſome promiſes made not only to the Church of the Jewes, but to all *Iſrael*, wherein not only their future converſion, but their reſtitution to their own land ſeeme to be held forth. I am not ignorant how peremptory many have beene of old, and of late, in determining of ſuch future events from the Word; and that many who have aſſerted the reſtitution of *Iſrael* to their land, have aſſerted with it alſo a reigne of Chriſt, not onely in his ſpiritual government, but in his perſon alſo on earth; and that the Church ſhall be in a very flouriſhing and glorious eſtate for a

thouſand

thousand yeers. Both of which assertions, as they have no sure footing in Scripture: so the first speaks but little comfort to the Church (which is that they intend in it;) for, seeing Christ hath a circumscribed body, he can be but in one place at once; and it is more comfortable to the Church in all quarters of the world, to be governed by his Spirit, and instruments employed by him, sitting at the Fathers right hand, then by deputies imployed by him, while he remains in one corner of the world, as that opinion must grant he will. And for the second, albeit the Church may (and belike after the conversion of *Israel* wil) have some glimpses and breathings of tranquillity and prosperity, yet that happy condition which many speak of, seemeth not to be very consistent even with common sense; for, if the Church and particular Saints, shall have corruption while they are within time, that fire will necessarily produce sparks of trouble; and how any trouble can be consistent with such a condition as these men speak of, I see not. The experience of the Jewes at the first coming of Christ, and of the Church in all ages, may sufficiently clear, how much carnal conceptions of the glory of Christs Kingdome have been disappointed, as savouring too much of flesh. Yet in this businesse whereof I speak, this would seeme (at least) probable; that as many passages scattered in the Prophets, whatever they foretold to the Nation of the Jewes at the first coming of Christ, or say daily for the comfort of *Israel* in the spirit; yet have not their full accomplishment till all *Israel* be converted, as the Apostle cleareth, *Rom.* 11. who citing a more obscure place to cleare it, doth warrant us to make use of others that speak more clearly: So there are also many passages in the Prophets, which however they may be applyed to a spiritual restitution of every true Church, and of *Israel* after the Spirit; yet in their full accomplishment, seeme to take in the restitution of the Nation of *Israel*: and this interpretation seemeth not to want Christs owne warrant, where he saith, *Luke* 21. 24. *They shal fal by the edge of the sword, and shal be led away captive into all Nations, and* Jerusalem *shal be troden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, where he seemeth to set the same term-day to their Captivity, and the desolation of *Jerusalem* (including the land) that the Apostle sets to their conversion, *Rom.* 11. 25, 26. And indeed, if the conversion of *Israel* wil be National, as is clear, not only from *Rom.* 11. but from *Hos.* 3. where they are foretold, *ver.* 4. that they shal

neither

neither have a true nor false religion in their exile, which must be understood of them taken as an incorporation, and Nation, (for as private men they have still some Religion wherever they are) and consequently their conversion, *ver* 5. must be National; If, I say, their conversion wil be National, it is agreeable to right reason that they wil get a Land for habitation, as a Nation; and what Land more expedient, then their own (though not now any more typical unto them) which God gave to their fathers of old? and which there are so plain promises (as would appear) for? And for a taste, any that pleaseth may consider on these passages, spoken not only to *Judah*, but to *Jacob*, *Ephraim* and *Israel*, *Jer.* 30.13,18. and 31.17. *Ezek.* 37.16,17,19,21,22,25. *Hos.* 11.9,10,11. and many others; which I wil not now insist to name, or discourse upon; only as I take no pleasure in singular opinions, nor to be peremptory in those things, which time wil be the best commentary unto; so there being so much to this purpose spoken in the Word, I could not but briefly point at such passages in any of these following Prophets as seeme to tend that way, that so the godly may be stirred up to pray more earnestly for the conversion of Israel, at which time the Lord, by performance, wil give his own commentary to these and many other promises.

I shal detaine thee (Christian Reader) no longer in the entrie, but to adde this, that if this piece prove acceptable, and may be useful to the Church of Christ, I purpose (the Lord continuing life, and assisting me) to follow with the rest of the small Prophets in the same Method; provided that some others, more fit, do not take the work in hand. Mean time, that this present piece may be blessed unto thee; and that thou mayest more and more fal in love with God to thee in Scripture, shal be the prayer of

*Thine to serve thee in the Gospel,*

GEO. HUTCHESON.

## Christian Reader,

IT cannot be denied on the one hand, that as the Lord in this last age hath manifested unto Britain, more then in any former time, the riches of his grace, in the clear and long continued offer of Righteousnes, reconciliation, peace, sanctification, and salvation, freely to be had by the hearty embracing of his eternal Son Jesus Christ; So for the long sleighting of his gracious and rich offer, he is now manifesting his just indignation and wrath against this unthankful and froward generation, not only by inflicting many sad bodily judgments, but also by sending upon the spirits of many, who have not received the love of the truth, strong delusions, that they should believe a lye, and be damned all of them who will not believe the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousnes, according as was foretold, 2 Thes. 2. 11.

And it cannot be denied on the other hand, that in the midst of this great wrath, the Lord remembreth his tender mercies towards us, by continuing hitherto the open preaching of the offer of his contemned grace; and by stirring up from time to time, the spirits of sundry of his servants, to open still more and more clearly the little book of holy Scripture, by pious and lear-

learned Annotations, larger Commentaries, ſhorter Paraphraſes, brief Explications, and other ſorts of fruitful writings. By theſe, and by all other means, he teſtifieth his lothneſſe to depart altogether from this Ile, which is engaged unto him by all ſorts of Obligations; and wherein, beſides thoſe who are already converted bleſſed ones, he hath many Elect ſouls to bring home from their pernicious wandrings: and this his gracious purpoſe doth appear in this, that as Satan is beſtirring himſelf in the maddeſt manner that any age hath heard of, to darken the light held forth in Scripture, by the helliſh ſmoak of ſo many pernicious errors: So the Lord is daily diſcovering more and more fully, the folly and vileneſſe of the veſſels of diſhonour, and of theſe abominations vented by them; thereby giving hope, that when they with Jannes and Jambres, have done their worſt to withſtand the truth of God in the mouth of his Miniſters, they ſhall proceed no further, then to carry away with them the uncleaneſſe of the houſhold to their owne ſhame and perdition, 2 Tim. 3. from verſe 1. to 9. and chap. 2. from ver. 16. to 21. This hope hath inclined the Author of this piece, among others, to offer his ſervice unto the Church, whom I need not to commend unto thee, nor ſpeak of the meaſures of the grace of God beſtowed upon him, becauſe his work will ſpeak for it ſelf, and thou after peruſing of any part thereof, wilt readily allow more unto him, then his modeſty will allow me to ſay of him, before thou ſhalt read what follows. Therefore let the prefixing of my name to this book, be judged to be no more, ſave my preſuming (upon thy acceptance of what I have heretofore written in this kind,) to come forth for mak-

king

making his acquaintance with thee: praying God the Father of lights, to bleſſe unto thee this his firſt eſſay, and his intention, by the grace of God to do more ſervice unto thee in this ſort; and for this end to increaſe his talents, and lengthen his life, and to ſtir up other able Labourers to take ſhare in this ſervice, till it be perfected to thy Edification. In which Petition let me intreat thee to joyne with

Thy Servant in the Goſpel,

DAVID DICKSON.

# A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECIES OF *Obadiah*, *Jonah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habbakuk* and *Zephaniah*.

## OBADIAH.

### The ARGUMENT.

THIS *Prophet among others, is raised up by God to denounce and foretel the judgments that were to come upon the posterity of* Esau, *because of their cruelty against* Judah *in the time of their distresse; which accordingly were executed (as Histories record) by the* Caldeans, *some yeares after the destruction of* Jerusalem: *And to comfort the Church of the Jewes, unto whom it could not but be a sad tentation, and addition to their sorrowes, to see those who had been ordained to serve them,* Gen. 25. 23. *so prosperous and insolent, while as they were sharply afflicted. We need not curiously enquire, who this* Obadiah *was; seeing that addeth nothing to the Authority of his message; and however the time wherein he lived and pro-*

*phesied be not expressely set down, yet considering the substance of his doctrine, and the affinity it hath with that of* Jeremiah, *chap.* 49. *and of* Ezekiel, *chap.* 25. *it appears that he prophesied after the Captivity of* Judah *under* Jehojakin, 2 Kings 24.10, 11, 12. *&c. if not also after the captivity under* Zedekiah, *at which time specially their neighbouring enemies were cruel and insolent, and* Edom *among, if not above the rest,* Psalme 137.7.

*The Prophecie (omitting the inscription) may be taken up in two parts.* 1 *The Lord threatneth* Edom *with destruction by war;* ver.1, 2. *notwithstanding their pride and conceit of their Countryes situation,* ver.3,4. *or of their treasures,* ver.5,6. *confederates,* ver.7. *their wisdome,* ver.8. *and valour,* ver.9. *and that because of their injurious dealing with their brethren of* Judah, ver.10,11. *which they ought not to have done,* ver. 12, 13, 14. *in regard a day of vengeance upon enemies was certainly approaching, wherein they should have a share,* ver. 15,16. 2. *The Lord comforts his afflicted Church with a promise of deliverance, of holinesse, and restitution,* ver.17. *of victory over their enemies,* ver.18. *of enlargement of their border,* ver.19,20. *and of fitted instruments and rulers with their King,* ver.21.

Ver. 1. *THe vision of Obadiah: Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen: Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battel.*

THe Authority of this Prophet and his Doctrine is asserted; and the judgement of *Edom* is summarily set down, that God, who is the Author thereof, hath all things in readinesse, that the Prophets and Church had received some intimation of the Lords dark counsel concerning *Edom*, and that as men by their Ambassadors, so the Lord by his effectual providence was about to stirr up the Nations that served *Nebuchadnezzar*, and make them willing to come against them. *Doct.* 1. The Prophets of God did not speak, nor are Ministers to speak the dreams of their own brain, but what they have received in commission from God. This Doctrine is *the Vision of Obadiah*, that is, what he received by prophetick revelation, represented

ſented either to the ſenſes or underſtanding; and *thus ſaith the Lord*, is prefixed to it. 2. The Word of the Lord (and eſpecially threatnings againſt impenitent ſinners) will have greateſt weight, when it is received as indeed the Word of God, and proceeding from ſuch a dreadful Majeſty; *Thus ſaith the Lord Jehovah*, he who hath an eſtabliſhed Dominion and Lordſhip over all creatures, and who can give being and performance to what he ſaith, and therefore not to be ſlighted. 3. Such as make defection from God, and renounce their intereſt in heaven for their belly and ſenſual pleaſures; it is righteous with God to brand them with infamy, and make them bear the prints thereof unto all generations; for not only *Eſau*, but his poſterity alſo bear the name of *Edom* to perpetuate the memory of his ſelling his birth-right for red pottage, *Gen.* 25. 29,30. &c. 4. The counſel and providence of the Lord extends it ſelf, and is exerciſed, not only about his Church, but even among enemies, he who reignes in the midſt of enemies, hath to *ſay concerning Edom*. 5. Albeit the enemies of God and his people be little ſenſible of their own condition, and what God intends againſt them; yet the Church is not left ignorant of what God will do with theſe enemies, but in his Sanctuary, and from his Word it may be ſeen; *We*, ſaith he, that is, I and my fellow Prophets, *Ezekiel* and *Jeremiah*, and by our Miniſtery the Church of God, *have heard a rumour from the Lord concerning Edom*, that is, ſome taſte of his dark counſel before it break forth in effect. 6. It is a comfortable and uſeful doctrine to the Church to be inſtructed concerning Gods judgments to come upon her enemies; partly that ſhe may be comforted in her troubles, in expectation that God will clear his affection toward her, in plaguing thoſe that wronged her: And partly, that ſhe may hereby ſee what ſins eſpecially God is angry at, to avoid them; for theſe ends is a Prophet raiſed up to preach, not in *Seir*, but in *Judah*, *concerning Edom*. 7. War is one of the ſharp ſcourges whereby God puniſheth wicked Nations; and it cometh upon a people not accidentally, but by the eſpecial providence of God, who hath Peace and War in his own hand; and who, when he hath any work to do, can make inſtruments (however led by their own principles and ends) active and willing. For, it is *from the Lord an ambaſſador is ſent among the Heathen*, who not only ſtirs them up, but makes them mutually to excite one another: *Ariſe ye, and let us riſe up in battel againſt her.*

**Ver. 2.** *Behold, I have made thee ſmall among the heathen: thou art greatly deſpiſed.*

The greatneſs of *Edom*'s calamity by this war is held forth from its effects; that hereby the Lord would diminiſh their number, power, wealth, and reputation, and put them beneath all other Nations, and load them with contempt and ignominy. *Doct.* 1. What ever inſtruments be imployed in inflicting any judgement, yet God is to be eyed as having chief hand in them all: *I have made thee ſmall*, ſaith the Lord. 2. The Lord purſuing for ſin, can bring down the greateſt perſon and people in the world, and lay them in the duſt, and poure contempt upon the moſt honourable: *I have made thee ſmall, and greatly deſpiſed.* 3. As the Lords judgements upon enemies are not readily foreſeen or expected by them; ſo when they come, they are remarkable, and to be remarked: ſo much doth this *Behold* import. 4. Things undertaken by God, and foretold by him in his Word, ought to be reckoned as certain as if they were already come to paſſe: *I made thee ſmall: thou art deſpiſed*, ſaith he; Whereas yet it was but in his purpoſe, and not accompliſhed. 5. To be ſingular in afflictions or judgements, or in the meaſure of them, addeth to the weight, and renders them more grievous: for *to be ſmal among the Heathen*, or Nations, implies not only that *Edom* was reckoned among the Heathen Nations, not of the Church, but that God by his judgements ſhould make him one of the ſmalleſt of them, and that none ſhould be ſo far brought under as he; and this is told him as an aggravation of his ſtroke. 6. As the Lords ſhewing mercy upon any makes way for mans mercy towards them alſo, in ſo far as may be for their good, *Jer.* 42. 12. So when the Lord becomes a party in anger, mens affections and reſpects will dry up; for however *Edom* was eſteemed of before, yet when God dealeth with him, *he is greatly deſpiſed.*

**Ver. 3** *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee: thou that dwelleſt in the clefts of the rock, whoſe habitation is high, that ſaith in his heart, Who ſhall bring me down to the ground?*

4. *Though thou exalt thy ſelfe as the Eagle, and*

*though*

*though thou ſet thy neſt among the ſtars, thence will I bring thee down, ſaith the* LORD.

For further confirmation of the judgement, the Lord enlargeth and amplifies the former ſentence, from ſeveral conſiderations, overturning all their vain confidences wherewith they were puffed up, as ſuppoſing to be exempted from the ſtroak by them. Whereby alſo the Lord partly diſcovers their pride and conceit becauſe of theſe; to be one of the cauſes of his controverſie againſt them; and partly alſo he explaines further the judgement to come upon them, by threatning to pull down every one of theſe confidences, and ſo make them completely miſerable and contemptible. The firſt vain-confidence, is the ſituation of their hilly Country, and their Cities built upon inacceſſible rocks; of which (as of the reſt) they were intolerably proud, as conceiving their Country to be inacceſſible, and their Cities to be invincible: Againſt which the Lord threatens, that though they dwelt as high as the Eagle builds her neſt, yea, as the Stars toward which Eagles mount, yet he ſhould reach them, and debaſe them, and ſo their Country ſhould be invaded, and their cities taken. *Doct.* 1. Outward advantages and accommodations concurring with a natural heart, uſually do produce pride, ſelf-confidence & inſolency, for *Edom* whoſe *habitation is high, is proud; and ſaith in his heart, Who ſhal bring me down to the ground?* whereas a renewed heart in all theſe is poor, and dependeth on God. 2. The Lord judgeth of mens pride, not ſo much by their outward carriage, which may be masked over with a ſhew of humility, as by looking to their heart, and diſcerning the conceit and lofty imaginations that reign there; He eyeth *the pride of Edoms heart*. 3. Of all the deceits that men are eſlayed with, ſelf-deceiving is one of the greateſt, when they are given up to delude themſelves with vain imaginations and confidences; *thine heart hath deceived thee*. 4. As pride and conceit, however it muſter up mens excellencies before them, is but a deluder, and makes a ſhew of what will prove nothing; as being either an evidence of being nothing in reality, or that what they conceit of, is blaſted and withered: ſo in particular, however preſumtion promiſe great things to make ſinners ſecure, and contemne Gods threatnings; yet it doth but deceive and feed with vain hopes; and will prove a deceiver in the end, when there is moſt need of what they promiſed: *The pride of thine heart hath deceived, &c.* 5. Pride in the creature is looked upon by God as a party

against him, as striking eminently at his glory in not depending on him, and as affecting his throne, and therefore provokes God, though there were no other quarrel or enemy, and ingages him to prove his power in abasing it. Therefore that general defiance, *Who shall bring me down to the ground?* is answered by God, as especially concerned, *I will bring thee down, saith the Lord.* 6. The Lord is able to reach man, and bring him down in his most eminent strength and greatnesse imaginable; and cannot only make strong holds a vain refuge in a day of vengeance, but is able to overturn more confidences then man can build up for his own security: *To dwell in the clefts of the rock,* is but a smal thing for Gods power to reach, and yet it was the height of that which *Edom* had to boast of; for, *Though thou exalt thy self as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down.*

Ver. 5. *If theeves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off?) would they not have stollen till they had enough? if the grape gatherers came to thee, would they not leave* some *grapes?*
6. *How are the* things *of Esau searched out? how are his hid things sought up?*

A second vain confidence is their wealth and treasures, wherewith men use to help themselves in their extremities. The Lord threatens to make these a prey to their enemies, who after their victory, being without fear of ambushes, should at leasure seek out, and carry away even their hidden Treasures, and so their spoiling should not be ordinary, but complete, even to admiration. *Whence learn,* 1. Riches treasured by those whom God hath a quarrel at, are so far from helping or delivering them in a day of wrath, or from doing the owners good, that they are justly given as a prey to their enemies: *Edoms things are searched out, and sought up.* 2. As the children of the Lord are to read the mercy of their trials by considering how moderate they are in respect of judgements upon enemies; so the wicked may see the severity of God in what their stroaks are beyond ordinary: for this end is *Edoms* spoiling set before him, as being beyond what *theeves and robbers by night* use to do, who use not to take all away, but what may suffice; as not being able to carry all,

or

or not daring for fear to ſtay and ſearch out all: and beyond what *grape-gatherers* do in vineyards, who according to the Law, *Lev.* 19.10. or, becauſe they cannot reach all with their eye, do ſtill *leave ſome grapes*; whereas *the things of* Eſau *are ſearched out, and his hidden things ſought up.* 3. The ſtroaks that God hath appointed for ſuch as not only live wickedly, but alſo turn enemies and perſecutors of his Church, are complete, and far beyond the ordinary viſitations that come upon the children of men: This compariſon betwixt *Eſau*'s ſtroak, and robbers their picking imports, that the one had been in ſome ſort a mercy and delivery, in reſpect of the other. 4. However the wicked be ſenſeleſſe and fearleſſe when God threatens them, yet his ſtroak will make them feel, and awake them: for this Exclamation, *How art thou cut off? how are the things of* Eſau *ſearched out? &c.* doth imply not any pity in the Lord or his Prophet towards them, but that the judgments ſhould aſtoniſh and affect themſelves when it came upon them.

Ver. 7. *All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee, have deceived thee,* and *prevailed againſt thee:* they that eat *thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none underſtanding in him.*

8. *Shall I not in that day, ſaith the* LORD, *even deſtroy the wiſe men out of Edom, and underſtanding out of the mount of Eſau.*

The third vain confidence is the help of their confederates, the Nations round about them, and eſpecially *Egypt*, whoſe intereſt it was to engage the *Edomites*, who lay in their frontiers, againſt the *Chaldeans*: The Lord threatens to make theſe the occaſion and inſtruments to promote their ruine, for all their confederates ſhould engage them to oppoſe the *Chaldeans* at the border of their Countrey, which was in effect to caſt them out of it; as the phraſe alſo in the Original ſignifies; their friends and intimate familiars by ſubtilty and fair pretences ſhould enſnare them to run on their own hurt and ruine, as if they had given them a bed to lye on, and yet hid a dagger in it, with the point upward, to ſlay them. And this is more fully cleared by reading the

words thus (as the Original hath it, without addition of any words which are put in the Tranſlation) *They have laid thy bread a wound under thee*: ſignifying, that their bread which they had from *Egypt* was the ſnare that drew them on their ruin. *Doct.* 1. According to the ſin of a Perſon or Nation, ſo ordinarily is their judgement; for *Edom* broke off that brotherly amity that ought to have been betwixt his brother *Jacob* and him, therefore he is paid in his own coine, his heathen confederates are his ruine. He ſinned in breaking bonds, and he is plagued in that other bonds break him, and are broken to him: *All the men of thy confederacie have brought thee even to the border, &c.* 2. God can make thoſe to be inſtruments of ſinners ruine, who in appearance are very near friends; and can make confederacies wherein men confide, the ſhort cut to their deſtruction: *Edom* was ruined by *his confederates, and the men that were at peace with him.* 3. The confederacies and alliances of politick men, are not to be truſted in, they being led only by their own State-intereſts, and not minding their benefit with whom they carry faireſt, but only their own advantage; for ſo did *Edoms* confederates, *The men that were at peace with him, deceived him*, they gave him *bread for a wound under him*, to put them betwixt themſelves and the dint of the enemy. The fourth vaine confidence is, their wiſdome and prudence, whereby they might think to manage their affairs dexterouſly, and to the beſt advantage, as it ſeems they have been famous for this, *Jer.* 49. 7. Concerning this the Lord foretels, that for all their wiſdom, they ſhould not be able ſo much as to diſcern and prevent the treachery of their confederates: And that becauſe the Lord would, when they were ready for the ſtroak, deprive them of wiſdom, either by taking away ſuch as were wiſe, or turning their wiſdome into folly. *Hence learn*, 1. When the Lord hath ruine to bring upon a people, their wiſdome and policy will not avert it. He can deprive men of wiſdom to manage their affairs, he can make the wiſeſt to be over-reached and out-witted, and can make what they think their wiſeſt courſe, prove greateſt folly in the iſſue; for *Edom* is wiſe, and many confederacies ſeemed a wiſe courſe to ſtrengthen themſelves; and yet in all this, *there is no underſtanding in him*, to diſcern the ſnares in it. 2. That wherein men are moſt eminent, and are ready to confide moſt in, will prove vain when they have moſt need, that the pride of all glory will be ſtained; for, *The wiſe men are deſtroyed out of Edom, and underſtanding out of the mount of Eſau*, who were

a wiſe

a wise people. Excellencies confided in are a disadvantage. 3. Whatever wisdome or excellencies be in men, they are all Gods gift and dependent on him, who gives or takes them away at his pleasure, and according as he hath a people, to raise or to ruine; for, *He destroyeth the wise men* when he will. 4. Mens wisdom and prudence is ordinarily looked upon by God as an enemy to him, and ground of a controversie, in regard that mens conceit of their wisdom is the cause why they give God little to do; & acknowledg not his providence, but take all upon themselves; for this question, *Shal I not, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom?* imports, that there is some necessity for his doing of it, and that their wisdome may not escape without a stain. 5. It is a singular demonstration of Gods Soveraignty and providence in the world, when he overturns the wisdome of the wise, brings all their well-contrived projects to nought, snares them in their own works and counsels, makes eminent fooles of them, and causes them to reel like drunken men, who were in reputation for wisdome; for, *When there is no wisdom in him*, the Lord declareth himself the Author of it, that we may see his hand in it, and give him the glory of it, and may believe his power to do the like when the wisdom of Adversaries is the Churches fear: *shal I not, saith the Lord, destroy the wise men, &c?* 6. However the threatnings of Gods Word may oftentimes seeme improbable when they are pronounced, yet in the Lords time the accomplishment will be remarkable: for albeit *Edom*, notwithstanding the Lords threatning, retain his former wisdom, (the Lord in his holy providence ensnaring wicked men so, who do contemn threatnings, when they are not speedily executed, *Jer.* 17.15.) yet, *In that day*, to wit of his calamity, *shal I not destroy the wise men, saith the Lord?*

Ver 9. *And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the Mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.*

The fifth vain confidence is, their valour and strength, for which also that Nation was eminent, as living by the sword, according as was foretold, *Gen.* 27.40. concerning this, the Lord threatens to confound with terror, the mighty men of their Country, or some part of it, most renowned for valiant men, and called *Teman*, from *Esau's* Grandchild, *Gen.* 36.15. or from its situation Southward (as the word signifies) from *Judea*. And so

ſo theſe being laid by, there ſhould be an univerſal ſlaughter of the inhabitants of the Country, at leaſt of every one of note (as the word in the Original ſignifies, and is tranſlated ſo, *Pſal.* 49. 2. and 62. 9. and elſewhere) as was uſual for the *Chaldeans* to do where they prevailed, 2 *Kings* 24. 15. *Doct.* 1. Natural men are in a ſort endleſs in their carnal confidences, and hard to be put wholly from them; but when one fails they will have another to flye to; Therefore is all this paines taken to ſhew the vanity of *Edoms* refuges, who if the ſituation of his Countrey faile him, hath treaſures to gather forces with; and failing that, confederates; or if they be wanting, prudence; which hath delivered people in great extremities; and if he be yet put to it, he hath *mighty men* to run on all hazards. And every one of theſe needs to be particularly threatned, to make them ſure of vengeance. 2. The terror of God is ſufficient to cruſh and overthrow the mightieſt of men; mans valour is not terror-proof, when the terrour is from God; *Thy mighty men, O Teman, ſhall be diſmayed*, and *broken* with terror, as the word alſo ſignifieth. 3. As terror upon a people is an ordinary forerunner of great deſolation; *Thy mighty men are diſmayed, and every one of the mount of Eſau cut off by ſlaughter*: So where the Lord hath a judgement to go through a Land, no probable or promiſing furniture will turn it away, but what would hinder it ſhall be made uſeleſſe: *The mighty men ſhall be diſmayed*, to the end that he may reach his purpoſe, and *cut off every one, &c.*

**Ver.** 10. *For thy violence againſt thy brother Jacob, ſhame ſhall cover thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever.*

The Lord having pronounced ſentence againſt *Edom*, proceeds to ſhew the equity thereof from the cauſe procuring it, upon which the ſentence is again repeated. In general, Gods quarrel againſt them, is for their violent carriage towards *Judah*, for which they are again threatned. *Doct.* 1. As the Lord doth not ſtrike a people, but where he hath a juſt quarrel; ſo the ſtupidity of men, in not laying ſin to heart, and their blindneſſe and ſelf-love is ſuch, as Gods quarrel will not be taken up till himſelfe diſcover it; Therefore doth the Lord himſelf here reveal it. 2. Of all the injuries and evil deeds committed by wicked men, none are ſo remarked, or ſo ſuddenly and ſeverely puniſhed as the injuries

injuries they do to the Church and people of God; The Lord threatens *Edom* for *violence againſt Jacob*, as if he had committed no other fault, and as filling his cup ſpeedily. 3. The Lord will not forget enemies their intereſt in, and obligations to the people of God whom they oppreſſe, that thereby he may aggravate their guilt, and double their puniſhment; Therefore the Lord reckons *Edoms* kindred to *Jacob*, that his unnaturalneſſe might appear, and to be a ground of the ſentence, *Thy Brother Jacob*. 4. Much ignominy and ſhame is abiding thoſe eſpecially, who ought to be friends, and are foes to the Church of God; partly in that they ſhall be diſappointed of their expectation to ſee the Churches ruine, and partly in that judgements from God ſhall make them baſe and contemptible, if not alſo confound them with horror, that they ſhould have taken part againſt the Church with thoſe who ruine themſelves; for, *ſhame ſhall cover Edom*, when he is deſtroyed by the *Chaldeans*, with whom he joyned againſt *Judah*. 5. Judgements upon the troublers and enemies of the Church, are without moderation and hope of recovery, as coming from the hand of Juſtice, and of a jealous God; *Thou ſhalt be cut off for ever*; for, however there may be ſome relenting under this or that particular ſtroake, yet (unleſſe that repentance prevent) juſtice makes what they get but an earneſt of more, and purſues them to all eternity, as this ſtroake of *Edom* is expounded, *Mal.* 1. 4.

Ver. 11. *In the day that thou ſtoodeſt on the other ſide, in the day that the ſtrangers carried away captive his forces, and forreigners entred into his gates, and caſt lots upon Jeruſalem, even thou* waſt *as one of them.*

*Edom*'s violence is more particularly deſcribed, by ſhewing poſitively what he had done, to wit, that in the day of the Churches trouble, he not only was an idle ſpectator, as to aſſiſting of his brother, but concurred with the enemy, as one of themſelves, to help forward the affliction. *Whence learn*, 1. Many ſad afflictions may come upon the priviledged people of God when God is provoked, and thoſe not onely cleanly trials and ſufferings for Truth, which have their large allowance of comfort, but judge-

ments

ments full of bitterneſſe and calamity; for here *Strangers carry away their forces, enter the gates* by force, *and caſt lots upon Jeruſalem*, or divide their prey by lots, as *Joel* 3. 3. *Nahum* 3. 10. 2. However the Lord in great ſeverity puniſh his people, yet he hath an eye upon the carriage of every inſtrument of their calamity, to requite them accordingly, and would have his humbled people comforted in believing that his love is ſuch as to do ſo; for, whereas it might have been thought, that the Lord when he was afflicting *Judah* had caſt of all pity towards them; yet afterwards he reckons with *Edom* for his behaviour, as that which he had narrowly marked, and revealeth this Doctrine to the Church for her comfort. 3. An idle beholder or onlooker on the people of Gods diſtreſſe, as not concerned, or affected with it, is in Gods account an enemy, eſpecially being one who is obliged to do otherwiſe: for, it is a part of *Edom*'s violence and cruelty that *He ſtood on the other ſide*, ſtaid aloof, looked on, and came not near to condole, as the ſame word in the Original is uſed, *Pſal.* 38. 11. 4. It is horrible wickedneſſe before God, and will be eſpecially remarked by him, when falſe brethren not only countenance, but actively concur and partake with enemies in oppreſſing the Church of God; *Even thou waſt as one of them*, in all their hoſtility; and a remarkable one, as being not only a brother, and they but *ſtrangers and forreigners*; but a moſt active inſtrument ſetting on the reſt, *Pſal.* 137. 7.

Ver. 12. *But thou ſhouldeſt not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a ſtranger; neither ſhouldeſt thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah, in the day of their deſtruction; neither ſhouldeſt thou have ſpoken proudly in the day of diſtreſſe.*

13. *Thou ſhouldſt not have entred into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity: yea, thou ſhouldſt not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid* hands *on their ſubſtance in the day of their calamity.*

14 *Neither*

14. *Neither ſhouldeſt thou have ſtood in the croſs way to cut off thoſe of his that did eſcape, neither ſhouldeſt thou have delivered up thoſe of his that did remain in the day of diſtreſſe.*

*Edoms* violence is yet further deſcribed by ſhewing negatively, what he ought not to have done, and yet did; to wit, that in the day of *Judah*'s calamity by the *Caldeans*, he a brother, who is borne for adverſity, *Prov.* 17. 17. ought not to have looked on their condition with delight, nor inſulted and ſpoken blaſphemouſly againſt God and his people, (as this is expounded, *Ezek.* 35. 12, 13.) not entred the City with the enemies, and ſpoiled them of their goods, nor have laid wait for ſuch of the Jewes as fled, to cut them off, or deliver them into the enemies hand. *Doct.* 1. The houre of the Churches trial and correction, is a very ſharp, dark, and violent blaſt: *It is a day of calamity, deſtruction and diſtreſs, a day wherein he becomes a ſtranger*; That is, not dealt with as a priviledged people, but as ſtrangers, and ſent to a ſtrange Country in exile, and were exerciſed with ſtrange lots. The Churches heinous ſins, and Gods jealouſie over his confederate people cauſeth this; and withal, the Lord mindeth to haſte over the Churches affliction, and therefore ſends it thick on. 2. The Church of God ſuffering much, muſt not therefore think to be exempted from more trial; but muſt, by what they ſuffer, be taught ſubmiſſion to yet further exerciſe, if the Lord will: For *Judah* in their *diſtreſſe and calamity*, muſt yet have more from *Edom*. 3. However wicked men walk after the luſts and paſſions of their own hearts, and ſtick at nothing which they will, and have power to effect, yet the Lord will let them know, that they ſtand obliged by a Law to duty, the violation whereof he will remark, aggravate, and puniſh: For though *Edom* ſatisfied himſelf and his paſſion, in what he did againſt *Jacob*; yet the Lord tells him, *thou ſhouldeſt not* have done thus and thus, but waſt obliged by the Law to do otherwiſe, being both a brother and a neighbour. 4. To adde affliction to the afflicted, is great cruelty, eſpecially when it is done by thoſe, from whom comfort might in reaſon be expected: *Thou ſhouldeſt not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a ſtranger, &c.* This adds to *Edoms* ſin, that he choſe ſuch a time wherein to let out his hatred. 5. As a careleſs or greedy look on the affliction of the people

people of God, as it were a pleaſant ſpectacle, is a further degree of their triall and affliction: So it is *Eſau*-like, and the badge of a reprobate condition, to take pleaſure in ſuch a ſight: For, it is twice marked, that hee *looked on the day of his brother*; (as an evidence of his cruelty, in adding that to their affliction: See *Pſ.*22.17.) 6. As rejoycing of enemies, and their blaſphemies againſt God, his truth, and his peoples priviledges in him, is an uſuall and ſore triall of the Church, when ſhe is in affliction; So it is the badge of wicked men to become inſolent with ſucceſſe, and a cauſe wherefore God will plead with them: For it is another challenge, as for great cruelty, that *Edom rejoyced over Judah in the day of their deſtruction, and ſpoke proudly in the day of diſtreſſe.* 7. The Lord will not forget the leaſt injures done by any to the Church, even when greater wrongs are in doing to them, which might ſeem to hide the leſſer; For, albeit the Caldeans were now bringing all to ruine; yet the Lord takes notice of an inſolent eye, proud looks, *entering into the gate, and laying hands on ſubſtance.* 8. Apoſtates and falſe brethren are moſt cruel enemies and perſecuters of thoſe whom they deſert; For, *Edom* the brother, beſide all his inſulting and joyning with the enemy, did yet more, and *ſtood in the croſſe way to cut off thoſe that did eſcape*; and *delivers up the remnant*, when it ſeems, the Caldeans had given over. 9. Even when God is afflicting his Church, and letting looſe the reins to the fury of men againſt them, yet he doth not quit his intereſt in them: For, in the midſt of all this ſtorm from the Chaldean and Edom, the Lord gives them the Covenant-title, *My people*, as not onely ſtanding unrepealed, but forth-coming for much ſympathie from God, and a reaſon why he thus pleads their cauſe; Sin may procure affliction, but every provocation will not make void the Covenant.

Ver. 15. *For the day of the* LORD *is neer upon all the heathen: as thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee, thy reward ſhall returne upon thine owne head.*

16 *For as ye have drunk upon mine holy mountain, ſo ſhall all the heathen drink continually: yea, they ſhall drink, and they ſhall ſwallow down, and they ſhall be as though they had not been.*

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The Lord repeats the threatning, and ſheweth that whereas no brotherly obligation, nor ſenſe of duty to God had moved *Edom* to deſiſt; yet there is another reaſon more touching, why he needed not be ſo inſolent: becauſe the heathen ſhould have their day of it, and that ſhortly, and particularly *Edom*; it being juſt with God to recompence their injuries done to the Church: and as his people had drunk of the cup of affliction; ſo to make *Edom* with others, drink of his judgment to their owne deſtruction. *Doct.* 1. God by his univerſal providence, is Sovereigne Lord and Judg of all men, even of thoſe who know him not, nor acknowledge him, to take trial of their wayes and puniſh them; for there is *a day of the Lord upon al the heathen*, a day of judicial cognition and recompence, and a day wherein he will prove himſelf God upon them. 2. The Lords correcting of his Church, is a preſage and pledge of vengeance to come on the world and enemies: for, when *Judah* is in diſtreſſe, *the day of the Lord on all the heathen is neer: when they have drunk, the heathen ſhall drinke.* 3. The Lord will not be owing his enemies any thing for afflicting his people, but will pay them in their own coin, and make them Scholars at the Schoole they bred the Church with: For, ſuch is *Edoms* doome, *as thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee, thy reward ſhall return upon thine own head.* 4. No external priviledge exempteth a people from affliction, when it is for their good, and their ſinful temper calleth for it; *Ye have drunk upon my holy mountain*, ſaith the Lord to *Judah.* 5. It is the Churches advantage to get the firſt eſſay of tryals and judgments, that they may be eaſieſt unto them, the cup of Gods wrath having ſtill, the neerer the bottom, the more dregs, which are reſerved for the wicked, to deſtroy them: For, *They have drunk upon my holy mountaine*, and yet are preſerved and ſpoken to; but *the heathen ſhall drink continually, and ſwallow down, and be as if they had not been*; that is, utterly conſumed. 6. The Lords correcting of his people is a meanes to endear them the more to him, and make them more precious in his eyes: For this ſentence againſt the Heathen, is directed by way of encouragement to the Church, (*as ye have drunk*, —— *ſo ſhall the heathen*, ——) to comfort and aſſure her, and make her confident of his good will, in that he will avenge her quarrell.

Ver. 17. *But upon mount Zion ſhall be deliverance, and there ſhall be holineſſe, and the houſe of Jacob ſhall poſſeſſe their poſſeſſions.*

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The reſt of this Prophecie contains comfortable promiſes unto the Church now in trouble, whereof however *Judah* had ſome taſte at their return from the Captivity, and afterwards; and albeit the Church of the Goſpel begetting continual performance of them in a ſpiritual way; yet (ſome of them at leaſt) ſeem to point more eſpecially at the time of the converſion and ſaving of all *Iſrael*, Rom. 11. In this Verſe there is promiſed to the Church deliverance and evaſion from her troubles; holineſs, and wonted priviledges, and reſtitution to their wonted poſſeſſions; not onely of the Jews, to what they were deprived of by the captivity, but of the whole *houſe of Jacob*, to what was given them by Covenant, made with their Fathers, which is yet unaccompliſhed. *Doct.* 1. Albeit the Lord in the time of the Churches trouble, withhold from her the poſſeſſion of her pleaſant things; yet his thoughts and purpoſes of love are then as large and ſure to her as ever, as ſhee may read from the Word, though ſhe ſee it not in diſpenſations: therefore the time of *Judah*'s trouble is a time wherein he makes many promiſes. 2. Not only is there in the greateſt afflictions of the Church ſtill ſome to eſcape, it being impoſſible ſhe ſhould totally periſh: but the Church may expect compleat deliverance from all her evils in due time; For *upon Mount Zion ſhall be deliverance.* 3. Holineſſe is the unſeparable companion of bleſſed deliverance, and is a means to ſecure it to the Church: for when there is deliverance, *there ſhall be holineſſe.* Holineſſe is an evidence of Gods dwelling in the Church, who will eſtabliſh his own habitation; and a token that God will preſerve them as his conſecrated people, and not ſuffer them to be profaned and polluted with invaſion of the enemies as formerly: And thus alſo *Holineſſe* is ſometime to be taken, *Joel* 3. 17. *Iſa.* 52. 1. as the fruit of the Holy Lords dwelling among them, and ſetting them apart for himſelfe, and as the free reward of their ſtudying Holineſſe. 4. Holineſſe is not only the Churches duty to ſtudy after it, but as the Lords promiſe, who undertakes to work it in her: For, it is a promiſe, *There ſhall be holineſſe*; they ſhall be an holy people, enjoy Gods preſence in holy Ordinances, and be preſerved from violence of enemies. 5. The mercies of the Church, whether ſpiritual or temporal, in ſo far as God hath promiſed, and they need them, are ſure, and ſuch as will be recovered after they have been ſuſpended from the comfort and uſe of them for a long time: For, *the houſe of Jacob ſhall poſſeſſe their hereditary poſſeſſions*, (as the word is) after long captivity and exile.

Ver. 18.

Ver. 18. *And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them, and there shal not be* any *remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken* it.

The next promise is of the utter ruin of *Edom* for the Churches sake; and of all the most inveterate enemies (such as *Edom* was) of the Church, and especially of the Church of converted *Israel*, who shall be the occasion and cause, if not also the instruments of their enemies destruction. *Doct.* 1. The Church of God will never want inveterate and cruel enemies, nor difficulties, while she is in the world: For, not only *Iudah* in the time of their Captivity, but the Church in her restauration by Christ, *and the house of Iacob and Ioseph*, (which takes in all *Israel*, and the ten Tribes expressly,) when they share of this deliverance, have *an house of Esau* against them. There is no time wherein the Church hath corruptions, but she is to look for difficulties in it. 2. Opposition of enemies unto the Church, doth but contribute to make way for Gods letting out many proofs of his love in helping and delivering her, as this promise doth teach. 3. Opposition to the Church, is a certain pledge of the utter destruction of opposers, and the Lord is able when he pleaseth, to make his weak people strong to bring it about: For this promise that *Iacob shall be a fire, &c.* imports not only that *Edom* shall be utterly consumed as a flame consumeth stubble; but that their medling with the Church shal be cause of their ruin; as if stubble indeavouring to put out a fire, were burnt it self; or that God should make the Church active to effect it, as was in part accomplished when the Jewes after their captivity destroyed the *Edomites*, as History recordeth. 4. The Word of God, and his Omnipotency and fidelity who speaks it, is sufficient to confirm the Churches faith in the certainty of most improbable things: For, whatever unlikelihood be in this promise, it is removed by this; *For the Lord hath spoken it.*

Ver. 19. *And they of the South shall possess the mount of Esau, and they of the plain, the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria, and Benjamin* shal possess *Gilead.*

20. *And the captivity of this hoast of the children of Israel* shal possesse *that of the Canaanites even unto Zarephath, and the captivity of Jerusalem which* is *in Sepharad, shal possess the Cities of the South.*

It is further promised, That the Church shall not only have restitution, but enlargement of their possessions, enjoying all their own, and possessing what had been their enemies. The Jewes in the South taking in *Edom* with their own portion; they who dwell in the plain enjoying the Philistines land as lying neerest them; and all their own borders recovered, not only *Ephraim, Samaria* and *Benjamin*, but *Gilead* also beyond *Jordan*; and for further confirmation, the Lord foretels that the numerous captivity of *Israel* should possesse their Northern border to *Zarephath*, or *Zareptah* toward *Zidon*, 1 *Kings* 17.9. And that the Captives of *Jerusalem* and *Judah* in *Sepharad*, (conceived to be a place in a *Chaldea*,) should possesse their South-border. Now concerning the accomplishment of this promise, it cannot be said that any thing done by the *Maccabees*, and their successors, or obtained by *Herod* and his successors from the Romanes, was the full performance, these things coming far short of what is here foretold; besides, that the children of *Israel* or ten Tribes are expressly mentioned in this Prophecie. Nor doth the taking the place in a spiritual sense fully exhaust the meaning, there being such expresse designation of places to be possessed, and of several troups of captives to possesse the several places; And therefore it seems to point further at the restitution of *Israel* to their own land, and the inlargement of their border, when they shall turn to Christ in the latter dayes, *Rom.* 11. 25, 26. However the Promise may teach us: 1. The afflictions of the Church, through Gods blessing, tend to their advantage and gain; For the Captivity are to get not only their own land, but the *mount of Esau and the Philistines*, and what they had not before their Captivity. 2. Christ in his Church will gain ground on his enemies, and possesse and reign over them, either by their voluntary conversion, or violent subjection and destruction: For so much doth the scope of this promise, being spiritually taken, import. 3. The priviledges of the people of God are irrevocable and immutable, and will break forth in comfortable fruits after long and sad interruptions. This is again signified and taught by *Israels possessing the fields of Ephraim, and Samaria, and Ben-*

*jamin*

*Jamin with Gilead* (as the Original hath it) of which they have been so long deprived. 4. The Lord marketh every distresse, and captivity of his people, and what becomes of them; and may manifest much of his goodness to such as he hath sore afflicted, and brought down with corrections: For though the *Captivity* was sent away with much ignominie, and carried far off; yet the Lord marks that they are the *captivity*, and where they are, and will restore them to their possessions, and cause them to possess the gates of their enemies.

Ver. 21. *And Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judg the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shal be the* LORDS.

A further Promise of fit instruments to be raised up in the Church to deliver her, and manage the cause of God against enemies as of old, when the Lord raised up Judges to deliver *Israel*: Whereby we are to understand, not only spiritually that Christ will send to the Church his Apostles and Messengers, who instrumentally save the Elect, 1 *Tim.* 4. 16. by holding forth Christ in the Word of Salvation, and by their Doctrine do condemn the world: but that in all Ages, and especially in the Church of converted *Israel*, God will raise up instruments of deliverance to the Church, as he did also in the times betwixt the captivity and coming of Christ. *Doct.* 1. The Church of Christ will not want fit instruments to promote her happinesse: For, *Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion.* 2. The allowance of the Church of God, is Salvation eternal and temporal also, in so far as is fit for her to receive: Therefore are the instruments sent to her called *Saviours*; to wit, in an instrumental way. 3. The Doctrine of the Gospel in the mouth of Christs Servants, doth reprove, judge and condemne the world, and all the enemies of Christ, and this judgement is seconded with spiritual plagues, and sometimes temporal, till the day come when the Word shall judge them, and they receive a complete recompence according to it. Thus do some of Christs instruments *judge the mount of Esau.* 4. As the Lord is Soveraign in all the world, even over his enemies: So when he raiseth up instruments for the Churches good, he will blesse them, and by them bring his enemies to an account, and execute his sentence against them; For these instruments of the Churches tempo-

ral deliverance do *judge the Mount of Esau*, when God delivers enemies into their hand as his delegates to pour his vengeance upon them.

The last and great promise is, that God in his Christ shall have a Kingdom in his Church, and among their enemies for their behoof. *Doct.* 1. Where Christ sets up his Church, there he sets up his Kingdom also, and will be acknowledged as such: For, the *Kingdom* shall be his. 2. No dominion or sovereignty is to be acknowledged in the true Church, but Christs only; he alone hath power to make Lawes binding the conscience, to institute Ordinances, enjoyn censures, appoint Officers, by his own Courts to judge his own House, &c. For, *the Kingdom shall be the Lords.* All other Saviours or instruments of deliverance must serve him, and his Officers must content themselves with his Ministry. 3. The Kingdome of Christ is matter of comfort to the true Church and godly, it being sweet to live under his yoak and protection; for it is a promise, *The Kingdome shall be the Lords.* 4. Christ holds his kingdom by a certain and firm tenure, as being made sure to him by the infallible promise of God, as here is recorded in holy Scripture, and upon this ground may the Church notwithstanding all opposition, expect the day when *the kingdomes of this world shall become the kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*, Rev. 11. 15.

# JONAH.

## The ARGUMENT.

JONAH *having prophesied in* Israel, *in or a little before the days of* Jeroboam *the son of* Joash, 2 Kings 14. 25. *but with little success, as may be gathered, considering the times wherein he lived; is sent to preach to* Nineveh, *the chief City of the* Assyrian *Empire: But disobeying the command, he is sharply punished by God till he was humbled for his folly. And being brought to follow the second call, after he had fulfilled*

*filled his message; God, upon* Nineveh's *repentance, spares them: whereat he repining, is reproved of God. In sum, the Prophets frailty is a preaching to all, and especially to disobedient servants; and the* Ninevites *their repentance, and Gods dealing with them, holds out his riches in mercy, and may convince all those, who are unfruitful under the pleuty of preaching. Albeit this be a History, yet it is justly reckoned among the Prophets, in respect of the Penman who was a Prophet, and in respect of the chief subject of it, which is a prediction of things to come: And however* Jonah *was in some things a type of Christ* Matth. 12. 37, 40. *Yet as the consideration of that is to be remitted to its proper place, so to speak of him as a type, further then in what is opened by Christ, is unsafe.*

## CHAP. I.

THe parts of this Chapter, are 1. *Ionah*'s disobedience to the Lords call, he essayed to flye to *Tarshish*, when he should have gone to *Nineveh*, to *ver.* 4. 2. The correction of his disobedience; The Lord by a mighty storm at sea, pursues him, til by lot and his own confession he is found guilty, and gives out his own doom, which is executed by the Mariners, though with much reluctancy, to *ver.* 17. 3 His preservation in his correction by a fish prepared to swallow him, *ver.* 17.

Ver. 1. *NOw the Word of the* LORD *came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,*

2. *Arise, go to Nineveh that great City, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me.*

HEre *Ionah* gets a commission and calling to go and preach against that great city *Nineveh*, and stoutly accuse and threaten them for their great wickedness, which was crying unto God for vengeance: *Whence learn,* 1. The servants of God are not to be at their own disposing, but to be employed in service, as the Lord thinks fit; for *Ionah*, after his employments in *Israel*, is put upon strange service of leaving his country, and going to a barbarous and wicked people to carry hard tidings, which might be very full of hazard in appearance. 2. Great and flourishing places have ordinarily great and crying sins; for, *The wicked-*

*nesse of* Nineveh *that great city is come up before God.* 3. As abounding sin is not in a cold rife way to be spoken against, but with all zeal and fervencie; so the Lords servants having commission from him, may and ought boldly to plead his controversie, and for him, against greatest persons or places: For *Jonah* is sent to *cry against the great City, and their wickednesse.* 4. Greatest sinners are ordinarily most secure and insensible; Therefore also doth *Nineveh*, whose sins are come up before God, need that the Prophet should *cry*, 5. The Lords reason for sending *Jonah* thither to preach, was not onely to shew that God is Lord of all the earth, and a punisher of sin even among Pagans, or to give some essay of sending his Word unto the Gentiles: but more especially, 1. To leave a standing witnesse in the repentance of *Nineveh*, against all those who obstinately contemn the Gospel, as this passage is commented upon by Christ, *Matth.* 12.41. 2. To forewarne all of the removing of the Lords messengers, when their message is not received. Therefore was *Jonah* sent away from *Israel*, which was now desperate in its backsliding; see *Mat.*21.43. 3. To convince all, that he takes no pleasure in the death of sinners; Therefore though *Nineveh*'s *wickednesse is come up before God*, yet *Jonah* is sent to warn them ere the stroak come on.

Ver. 3. *But Jonah rose up to flie unto Tarshish from the presence of the* LORD, *and went down to Joppa, and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the* LORD.

Here we have *Jonah*'s disobedience to this call, he being surprised with the novelty of such a charge, and fearing hazard, or want of success, or as may be gathered from Chap.4.2.that if either on their repentance, or in Gods long-suffering, threatenings should not be executed, he might be reputed a false Prophet, and so be exposed to contempt, (whereof the Prophets of God had many trials in *Israel* it self, 1 *Kings* 22. 8, 18. 2 *Kings* 9. 11.) Therefore he resolves to flee from God to *Tarshish*, in *Cilicia*; not that he denied his universal presence in all the world, but (as the original bears) *He fled from before the face of the* Lord

*Lord*, that is, from the land where God usually manifested himselfe to the Prophets, and from obeying the Lord, as a rebellious servant flying from his Master, in whose presence he useth to stand. And this resolution he followeth, and finding at *Joppa* a ship, he sets to the journey, it being safer and nearer to travel by sea then by land. *Doct.* 1. It is an usual fault in men to examin Gods command by their owne wisdome or will, and accordingly as they judge, to obey or disobey; for, so doth *Jonah* here, *He rose up to flye, &c.* and so do all they, who look more to see a reason of Gods commands satisfactory to them, then to the will of the Commander. 2. Even the precious servants of the Lord have so much unmortified corruption, as (being left to themselves) may drive them on in very high fits of disobedience; For *Jonah*, a Prophet, doth avowedly resist the will of God. 3. Rebellion in the children of God may not onely be a sudden tentation or a fit shortly shaken off, but they may go on long in it, and with great deliberation; for, *Jonah* all the while hee was going to *Joppa*, fraughting the ship, and launching out (by all which the Lord tryed his abiding by it) continueth in his resolution. 4. Men in their rebellion are ordinarily so addicted to their own will, that they are blinde and inconsiderate, not pondering any inconvenience that may ensue, but will hazard all, rather then be crossed in their purposes. This doth appear in *Jonah*; hee who knew the Lord will disobey him, and yet think to prosper; hee will rather lose that great priviledge of standing before the Lord, to receive prophetick revelations, then want his will, which is twice marked, to shew his great madnesse: yea, hee will rather be at charges to *pay the fare*, and hazard to Sea with Pagan men, then goe among Pagans at Gods command. 5. Successe in a way of rebellion against God, is a snare, leading on the rebell to sadder corrections; Therefore *Jonah found a ship ready*, and opportunity to launch out, that he may get a sharper rod at sea, where Pagans should be witnesses, and not *Israel*.

Ver. 4. *But the LORD sent out a great winde into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.*

Followeth *Jonah*'s correction; The Lord by a violent tempest, likely to break the ship, pursues him till he bee found guil-

ty, and caſt into the ſea. *Whence learn,* 1. A ſtorm will ſooner or later overtake them who rebel againſt God, though they were his own people; for, *Jonah* went on in his way, *but the Lord ſent out a great wind, &c.* 2. God is Sovereign Lord of the winds, and in the ſea, as well as the dry land, and can arm any creature he pleaſeth againſt a rebel; for, *The Lord ſent out a great wind,* and cauſed *a mighty tempeſt in the ſea.* 3. To be in company with wicked men, or with men in a wicked way of rebellion againſt God, is dangerous, and may involve the ſociety in hazards with them; for, *the ſhip was like to be broken,* and all the reſt in danger of periſhing with *Ionah.*

**Ver. 5.** *Then the Mariners were afraid, and cryed every man unto his god, and caſt forth the wares that were in the ſhip into the ſea to lighten it of them: but Jonah was gone down into the ſides of the ſhip, and he lay and was faſt aſleep.*

In the next place we have ſome effects and conſequences of this tempeſt, by which at laſt Gods purpoſe in it is brought forth: The firſt effect upon the Mariners is fear, ſtirring them up to do all that is uſual in ſuch deſperate caſes for their own relief, both ſuch means as they accounted divine, in calling on their gods, and ſuch as were humane, in caſting out of their commodities to lighten the ſhip; all which is amplified from *Jonah*'s ſecurity, who in the mean time was ſleeping. *Doct.* 1. God can ſhake, and by trouble will ſhake the hearts of ſtouteſt men, and make them fear; for, *the Mariners,* otherwiſe ſtout at ſea, *are afraid.* 2. Men may be afraid, and much exerciſed about troubles, whom yet the Lord intends not to hurt by them; for, *the Mariners are afraid* of the ſtorm, ſent out to purſue *Ionah,* and not them, however they had their own groſs ſins. 3. Even natures light may teach men to aſcribe ſingular effects to the hand of a Sovereign Lord, and that without acknowledging thereof, there can be no ſafety in eminent dangers; for ſo doth theſe Pagans practice teach us, while in their fear they *cried every man to his god.* 4. As natures light in corrupted man will miſlead him in taking up the true God; ſo when men turn their back upon the true God and the knowledge of him, they become vain in their imaginations, and endleſs in their ſeeking out of falſe gods and confidences; therefore among Pagans, even in one ſhip, there are more falſe Gods then one worſhipped; *They cryed every man*

*to his god.* There is no certainty when the true God is forſaken. 5. Although men ought not to be unwilling to yeild up their life to God, when or whereſoever he in his providence ſhall bee pleaſed to call for it; yet life is ſo precious, that nothing worldly beſide, is too dear to be employed for preſervation of it: Natures light teacheth this to theſe Mariners, who *caſt out the wares that were in the ſhip*, to eſſay if that could be a means of preſerving their life. 6. Ordinarily thoſe who are moſt guilty, and whom affliction is pointing at, are moſt ſecure under it; for, all this while *Jonah* the guilty man *was faſt aſleep.* 7. The conſcience of a renewed man may, after it is wounded by a groſſe ſin, be a very dead and ſtupified conſcience for a time: for, *Ionah* flying from his Maſter, in the midſt of the ſtorm *lay faſt aſleep*, and *was gone down to the ſides of the ſhip* for that end. 8. It is ordinary for guilty conſciences to think to ſhift and ſleep away challenges, without eſſaying the true remedy; for *Ionah* in his rebellion *was gone down to the ſides of the ſhip*, to ſleep away his trouble.

Ver 6. *So the ſhipmaſter came to him, and ſaid unto him, What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Ariſe, call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon us that we periſh not.*

To the end the Lord may diſcover the guilty man, and cauſe of this tempeſt, as he made the Mariners ſenſible themſelves, ſo the Shipmaſter is ſet on work to waken *Ionah*, to try his intereſt with his God (whom they knew not yet to be the true God) if poſſibly he had more power or good will to ſuch as worſhipped him, then theirs had: Which is the firſt ſtep to his diſcovery. *Doct.* 1. A childe of God may ſometimes miſcarry ſo far, through infirmity, negligence and tentation, that even a Pagan by natures light, may ſee him reproveable and blame-worthy; for ſo is *Ionah* reproved by the ſhipmaſter, *What meaneſt thou? &c.* 2. It is deeply cenſurable and abſurd, even to natures eye, to be ſecure in trouble: *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe, &c.* 3. Variety of falſe Gods hold men in great ſuſpenſe and incertainty; therefore every man *having cryed to his god*, ver. 5. yet they are not ſetled, but will have *Ionah* to eſſay his God, if he be better then the reſt, *Ariſe, call upon thy God*; ſo much alſo doth that doubtful ſpeech, *if ſo be that God will think upon us, &c.*

*&c.* import in this place, in part. 4. Natures light will acknowledge that he who is the true God, hath power to deliver in moſt extreme dangers; for in this great tempeſt, they aſſert it: *If God think on us, we will not periſh.* 5. Howſoever in a calme day, nature conceit and boaſt of merit, yet in a ſtrait even natural men are forced to have their recourſe onely to the favour of God; for theſe Pagans have no ground of hope that they ſhall not periſh, but *in Gods thinking* (or *being bright and ſhining*, as the word ſignifies, that is, looking favourably) *on them.*

**Ver. 7.** *And they ſaid every one to his fellow, Come, and let us caſt lots, that we may know for whoſe cauſe this evil is upon us. So they caſt lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.*

The ſecond effect of this tempeſt tends to a further diſcovery of *Jonah* to be the guilty man. Hee being awaked and not confeſſing his ſin, the tempeſt continues notwithſtanding all they had done. Therefore the mariners, in ſtead of ſearching every man into himſelfe, that all might take with guilt, and finde favour, begin to ſuſpect that God was purſuing ſome notorious guiltineſſe in ſome of them, and none voluntarily confeſſing it, they reſolve with common conſent to ſeek it out by an extraordinary way of lots. Wherein whatever fault there was, yet Gods providence ordered it ſo, as the lot fell on *Jonah*, to awake his conſcience. *Doct.* 1. Nature may lead men ſo far as in great difficulties to take up ſin to be the cauſe thereof; for ſo much doth this conſultation import, which however it was true in this caſe, and it be alwayes true that ſin is the root affliction ſprings from; yet nature uſes not to goe ſo far as to lead men to lay ſin to heart in common and ordinary croſſes, or to look on common and ordinary ſins as provocation ſufficient to bring on ſaddeſt tryals; for they muſt ſeek ſome ſingular cauſe here: far leſſe to look on afflictions as tryals of faith, or for preventing of ſin. 2. Men in nature uſe not ſo much to take up, and be ſenſible of ſin, from the law of God having authority in their heart, as grope it in ſome tryal and difficulty: Therefore they of whoſe ſenſe of guilt we heare not before, do now in their trial begin to think *for whoſe cauſe this evil is.* 3. Prayer never ſo much eſſayed in a day of diſtreſſe will not availe, till ſin procuring it be ſearched out and taken with; ſo much do theſe Pagans acknowledge, while with the former meanes of prayer, they ſet themſelves to ſeek out

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the guilty, and to knowe *for whose cause this evill is upon them.* 4. Afflictions sharply pursuing, may have such efficacy as to put men, otherwise careless, to it, to seek out sin, and not let them sleep on who gladly would, and have been insensible of sin; for, these men are so put to it, as they are willing to have the quarrel sought out, and to submit themselves to a lot for that effect: *They said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know, &c.* Afflictions will *command* men to turn from iniquity, who would not hear such a charge in any other language, *Job* 36. 10. 5. The Lords all-seeing eye perceives every secret sin, and his providence over-rules most contingent and uncertain events, and holily ordereth the rash actions of men so, as to bring about his own purposes by them: For, these men acknowledg that the guilty is known, though not to them, and that the determination of a contingent lot over-ruled by a Deity, is a true evidence for whose cause this evil is. And albeit it was a fault in them not to search every man himselfe, or to consult by lots without special warrant; yet God over-ruleth the lot to discover *Jonah.* 6. The Lords controversie is sometime greater and more severely prosecuted against his own children for their miscarriages, then against Pagans and gross Idolaters among whom they may be; Therefore, *the lot*, guided by God, *fell upon Jonah*, signifying his rebellion to be the cause of all their danger, rather then their Idolatry, though openly practised in the height of their streight: for, 1. Rebellion is as Idolatry, 1 *Sam.* 15.23. and so much the grosser, as it is in a child. 2. Albeit they worshipped that which was no god; yet none of them had so behaved themselves toward a supposed Deity, as he had done toward the true God, *Jer.* 2.10,11. 3. God may wink at sin in Pagans, but will not let his own child go on unreclaimed, *Amos* 3.2. it being mercy to pursue them for their folly, and amend them.

Ver. 8. *Then said they unto him, Tell us we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us. What is thine Occupation, and whence comest thou? What is thy Country? and of what people art thou?*

The guilty man being now discovered by God, is examined by the Mariners to find out the particular fact, but very discreetly, as

as ſuppoſing that poſſibly the ſin might be ſomewhat whereof his Nation and people were guilty, and not any particular guilt of his own. And therefore concerning himſelfe they enquire of his calling and journey, if ſo be they might be unlawful; and of his countrey and people, if ſo be they were accurſed. *Doct.* 1. Men have need of full information, before they give out ſentence upon any; for, though *Jonah* was taken by a lot, and theſe men not knowing him, might in paſſion ſhortly have rid themſelves of him, who had been the occaſion and cauſe of their trouble; yet they will farther informe themſelves, and that very meekly; *tell us, we pray thee, &c.* 2. Charity, even in refined nature, doth not eaſily admit of an hard conſtruction of any, or without ſure grounds; Therefore they firſt enquire, *tell us for whoſe cauſe this evil is upon us*, as deſiring to be more particularly informed, and not being willing to hold him for a wicked man in his own perſon, till they ſhould heare further. 3. As in mens callings, employments, country and people, there is hazard of ſin; ſo by thoſe circumſtances, much of mens faults may be found out: Therefore is *Jonah* poſed concerning all theſe; For, beſide unlawful callings, and places where it is not lawfull to haunt, every particular countrey and people have their own tentations to particular ſins, from which ſins of a generation or calling, it is hard to keep free. 4. Men do oftentimes, following their own ends, engage in courſes without all conſideration, till a day of trouble ſet them to trace them back and make enquiry: For, theſe Mariners, minding their own gain, put none of theſe queſtions to *Jonah*, when they tooke him aboard, till the ſtorm led them to ſee their folly and raſhneſſe. 5. The Lord, in purſuing for ſin, knowes how to order challenges, ſo as may make ſin moſt bitter to the guilty; Therefore doth he order the Mariners moving of theſe queſtions, *What is thine occupation? &c.* every one of which might be a ſting to *Jonah's* conſcience, that he, a Prophet, ſhould be fleeing from God; coming from the holy land and the Church, ſhould be rebellious and purſued rather then Pagans; that he ſhould be on a way and not have a warrant from God for it, &c.

Ver. 9 *And he ſaid unto them, I* am *an Hebrew, and I feare the LORD the God of heaven, which hath made the ſea, and the dry land.*

10. *Then*

10. *Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and ſaid unto him, Why haſt thou done this? (for the men knew that he fled from the preſence of the* LORD, *becauſe he had told them.)*

*Ionah's* confeſſion in anſwer to their queſtion, cleers up the matter of fact, for which God was purſuing him; whereat theſe Idolaters (being dazled with the apprehenſion of the Majeſty of God) are aſtoniſhed through fear, admiring at, and reproving his preſumption. *Hence learn,* 1. God will not ſuffer iniquity, how well ſoever concealed, to lurk; but will bring it out to light, eſpecially where he hath a purpoſe of mercy to the ſinner: Therefore is *Jonah* purſued till he confeſſe his ſin, even before Pagans; *He told them that he fled, &c.* 2. Sin is not barely to be confeſſed, but ought to be aggravated by every perſon that would be approved as ſenſible of it: For ſo much doth this ſpeech, *I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven, &c.* implie; and it was a great ſin in him, a member of the Church, to dallie, and that with ſuch a great God. 3. The true God is to be commended by all his children, and ſet forth, as they are able, before naturall men, that they may have no occaſion to think baſely of him: For, ſo much alſo doth this deſcription of God, *The God of heaven, which hath made the ſea, and the dry land,* (intimating, that hee onely had raiſed that tempeſt) import. 4. It is a fearfull condition to be found in a way of rebellion againſt the great and mighty God; therefore theſe Pagans hearing of the greatneſſe of God, and of *Jonahs* fact, *were exceedingly afraid, and ſaid unto him, Why haſt thou done this? &c.* 5. The more men ſee of Gods hand in judgments, eſpecially that he is purſuing for ſin, they will affect the more: For, they who were afraid before at the tempeſt, *ver.* 5. now when they ſee God purſuing Rebellion by it, *are exceedingly afraid.* 6. The light and judgment of naturall men may be more cleer in many things, then the light of a childe of God under tentation; For, *they fear exceedingly,* and tremble at what *Jonah* hazarded upon, in fleeing from the preſence of the Lord; *Why haſt thou done this? &c.*

Verſ. 11. *Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall wee doe unto thee, that the Sea may be calme unto*

*unto us? (for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.)*

12. *And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest* is *upon you.*

*Jonah* being now found out, and by his own confession convicted of guilt, pronounces his own sentence against himselfe, that he, as the cause of all their trouble, should be cast into the sea, in regard that it still raged, testifying that Gods anger was not appeased. *Doct.* 1. Confessing, yea, and repenting for scandalous sins, will not sometimes exempt from such correction, as may make the guilty see more of Gods displeasure, and so the desert of sin: For albeit *Jonah* had now confessed his sin, and that with remorse, as may appear from the confession, and that which followeth here; yet *the sea wrought and was tempestuous*, as seeking him. 2. It is a kindly fruit of affliction, when men are taught tenderneſse and humanity, and a greater subjection of spirit to follow the revealed will of God under it; therefore the Mariners in this strait consult with *Jonah* himself, *What shall we do unto thee?* as minding in humanity and compassion to do nothing without his own consent, and intending to reverence what he should say, as being a Prophet of God. 3. A sinner truly humbled will be sensible of the huge desert of sin, and will submit and reverence the righteousneſse of God in saddest punishments: Therefore *Jonah* counsels, *Take me up, and cast me into the sea*; not out of any bitterneſs, or hatred and wearineſse of his own life; but from a Prophetick spirit, knowing Gods mind, and from the sense of sin, acknowledging the equity of the sentence in his conscience. 4. It will be most sad and bitter to an humbled sinner to be accessory, by his provocation, to the affliction of others, and to be a drawer on of common calamities; *Cast me forth*, saith he, *so shall the sea be calme unto you, for I know that for my sake, &c.*

Ver. 13. *Nevertheleſs the men rowed hard to bring it to the land, but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.*

14 *Where-*

14. *Wherefore they cryed unto the* LORD, *and ſaid, We beſeech thee, O* LORD, *we beſeech thee let us not periſh for this mans life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O* LORD, *haſt done as it pleaſed thee.*

15. *So they took up Jonah and caſt him forth into the ſea, and the ſea ſeaſed from her raging.*

*Jonah* having pronounced ſentence againſt himſelf, the Mariners execute it; but firſt out of compaſſion toward him, they uſed their utmoſt endeavours to get to any land by rowing; but to no purpoſe, for God made the ſea fight againſt them. Therefore they pray and proteſt, that their executing of the ſentence might not be imputed to them as blood-ſhed, he being innocent in reſpect of them: and what they were now to do, being undertaken only in obedience to Gods Soveraigne providence and will revealed by *Jonah* himſelf. And on theſe conditions they proceed to execution, upon which followeth their deliverance from their ſtrait. *Doct.* 1. Even humanity in natural men will be tender and compaſſionate towards thoſe who are in trouble, though juſtly procured; eſpecially if they know them to have relation to God, and to be ſenſible of their condition. Therefore albeit *Jonah* had been the cauſe of their trouble; yet looking on him as a Prophet of God, and pitying him when they heard his confeſſion and ſentence againſt himſelf, *they rowed hard to bring it to land*, and would trouble themſelves to exempt him. 2. Even refined nature hath an antipathy againſt blood-ſhed, and manſlaughter, if in juſtice it could be avoided: This appears in their endeavours and earneſt proteſtations before they execute a juſt ſentence. 3. The utmoſt endeavours of men will not fruſtrate the purpoſes of God, nor free a guilty ſinner from his ſtroak: For, *they rowed hard* to exempt him, *but the ſea wrought, and was tempeſtuous againſt them*, as purſuing him, and them alſo, if they did not what God revealed to be their duty. 4. God in his Sovereignty diſpoſeth of all things at his pleaſure and will: This do they acknowledge and ſee in this ſentence, *Thou, O Lord, haſt done as it pleaſed thee.* 5. Extremeſt neceſſities give no latitude to men to do any thing, but what is warranted of God; For they judg that no neceſſity could free them from the guilt of innocent blood in caſting out *Jonah*, but only Gods revealed will:

will: For, ſay they, as a reaſon, *Thou, O Lord, haſt done as it pleaſed thee.* 6. Men are to go about actions in obedience to the Sovereign will and pleaſure of God revealed to them, which otherwiſe their inclinations are much averſe from: For, in obedience to the Lords will, *They took up Ionah and caſt him forth*, much againſt their own hearts. 7. As God is a ſevere chaſtiſer of rebellion in his own deareſt children: ſo rebellion againſt him deſerves that the Rebel ſhould be cut off in a violent way, and that the Lords earth or ſea ſhould not carry him: For, ſo is *Ionah caſt forth into the ſea.* 8. The execution of juſtice upon the guilty in a ſociety, is a means of turning away judgements from the reſt; For, *Ionah* being caſt forth, *the Sea ceaſed from her raging.* See *Pſ* 106.30.

Ver. 16. *Then the men feared the* LORD *exceedingly, and offered a ſacrifice unto the* LORD, *and made vowes.*

All thoſe paſſages are amplified from an effect they had upon the Mariners, who obſerving all that was done, and having no doubt heard *Ionah* preach more of God, then is recorded, (as appears from *ver.* 10.) are moved to tremble and fear the true God, and teſtified it by ſacrificing unto him, (whether preſently, they being as yet ignorant, or at *Jeruſalem*, we will not determine,) and making vowes for the future, belike, that they would dedicate themſelves to God, and profeſſe the true Religion. *Doct.* 1. In one work the Lord may have more holy purpoſes then one, and beſides what we ſee, may be doing many other things: For, while he is purſuing *Ionah*, he is alſo ſetting forth himſelf, and preaching his power and juſtice to Pagans, when *Ionah* refuſed to go to *Nineveh* and do it. 2. The Lord can in a ſhort time, and by few means, produce ſtrange effects and changes upon the children of men, even although they had not heard of him before: For, however it cannot certainly be determined, whether theſe Mariners were indeed converted, or whether it was *Ionah*'s Doctrine revealing God, and miſery, and mercy, or their apprehenſion of God in this work, that wrought moſt upon them; yet this is certain, that this ſhort while of the tempeſt and calm, and *Ionah*'s preaching, made a great change: *The men feared the Lord exceedingly, &c.* 3. As the Lord can eaſily make up mens loſſes which they ſuſtain in his providence;

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so it ish is way sometimes to make up temporal losses with some spiritual advantage: So these men, whose ship and lives were in hazard, and their goods lost, are made up, in that they had a Prophet among them, and are brought to know somewhat of the true God, which made it a rich voyage. 4. The Lords dispensations among a people, especially when they are accompanied with any thing of his Word, calls for their improving them to some spiritual advantage; so much doth their practise presse upon us, while by considering on what they saw, felt and heard, *they feared the Lord exceedingly.* 5. God rightly considered and taken up, as he hath revealed himselfe, and as he appeareth in some special acts of providence, is exceeding dreadfull, and to be stood in aw of: For, *they feared* him *exceedingly.* 6. It is not a sufficient proofe of mens getting the fruit of Gods dispensations toward them, when they onely affect and draw to some acknowledgement of him for the present, but grow negligent for the future: This they acknowledge in their practise, *they offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vowes*, for the time to come, and engaged themselves to God.

Ver. 17. *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish, three dayes and three nights.*

The Chapter closeth with the narration of *Jonah*'s preservation (though thus pursued by justice) in a fishes belly, where, in a miraculous way, hee was kept three dayes and three nights. *Doct.* 1. When God is pursuing the rebellion of his children in a most severe way; yet doth he not altogether cast off his mercy toward them, but out of the abundance thereof, moderates their affliction: For, *The Lord*, pursuing *Jonah*, *had* yet *prepared a great fish to swallow him up.* 2. Gods providence overrules and directs the motions of irrational creatures and Sea-monsters, as pleaseth him: For, *the Lord had prepared a great fish, &c.* whereas it knew nothing but to range up and down in the Sea, and swallow him as any other prey. 3. God may have a mercy, and proofe of love waiting upon his people, in a time and place where it would be least expected: For, *Jonah* meets a mercy in the heart of a raging Sea, into which hee is cast in anger, as to be destroyed. 4. Albeit the mercy of God will not destroy his guilty people in their afflictions; yet his wisdome seeth it

not sitting at first totally to deliver them, but will have their faith exercised: For, *Jonah* is here arrested *three dayes and three nights* between hope and perplexity for his further exercising. 5. God can, when he seeth fit, preserve his people from ruine in an incredible and miraculous way: Therefore *Jonah* is not only *swallowed* whole by the fish, not being hurt by its teeth; but is preserved in the *belly of the fish three dayes and three nights*, where he was in hazard of choaking for want of breath, or of being digested by the fish into its own substance.

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# CHAP. II.

THis Chapter containeth, 1. *Jonah*'s exercise in the fishes belly, *ver.* 1. And 2. An ample declaration of that his exercise, penned after his deliverance, with an addition of praise; wherein he summarily rehearseth his trouble, exercise and deliverance, *verse* 2. and more fully enlargeth the narration of his trouble and exercise, and how by faith he obtained victory while he was yet in the strait, *verse* 3, 4. And again, declareth how his tentation assaulted him afresh by reason of his hopelesse condition, that he may set forth Gods great bounty in his actual deliverance, *verse* 5, 6. All which being again summed up, *verse* 7. He by way of conclusion condemns mens following of crooked wayes, *ver.* 8. and promiseth praise, *v.* 9. 3. A declaration of the way of his deliverance out of the fishes belly, *v.* 10.

**Ver. 1.** *THen Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God, out of the fishes belly.*

FRom *Jonah*'s exercise in this his prison, *learn*, 1. It is a kindly fruit of sanctified exercise in trouble to get insensibleness, bitterness, quarrelling and the like distempers overcome, and to set about humble prayer: for, *Then Jonah prayed.* 2. It is

is requisite for the right performance of prayer in a strait, that the Supplicant take up God in the Covenant of Grace, as his own, that so he may pray with humble confidence: For, *Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God.* 3. The Lords correcting of his people for their sins, is no evidence of his breaking Covenant with them, nor ought to hinder a convinced Saint from claiming an interest in God, as a ground of his approach unto him; for *Jonah* being under this sad stroak; yet by faith *prayed unto the Lord his God.* 4. As no condition or estate ought to discourage from prayer, as if it were in vain to use it: so rebels against God may have his favour to sue after by prayer in hard conditions; because they would not otherwise study to please him: for, *Jonah prayed out of the fishes belly*, where for disobedience to God he is put to pray with much disadvantage.

Ver. 2. *And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me, out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.*

The sum of his trouble, exercise and issue of it, as he recordeth it after his deliverance, is, That being by affliction brought as to the grave, and under the dominion of death, yet he prayed and got audience. *Doct.* 1. The exercises and experiences of the children of God ought to be communicated one to another, as they have a calling and opportunity, for mutual instruction and edification; for so doth *Jonah* here, *He said, I cryed, &c.* which is not to be understood, as if he had said this in the fishes belly, (for it is not a prayer, but rather a thanksgiving) but sheweth what he expressed after his deliverance, and that he made a rehearsal of his whole condition for the edification of others. 2. Great afflictions or temptations arising from them, are so far from being just cause of discouragement to hinder our praying, that they ought to stir us up to more fervency and earnestnesse; for *Jonah cried, by reason of affliction*, when he was straitned on every hand, (as the word signifies,) that he could not flee or finde relief; he took it as a Call, to seek inlargement in God, and turn to him, and as a whet-stone to sharpen his (otherwise) sluggish desires; yea, *Out of the belly of hell he cryed*; when he was buried quick, and put as it were under the dominion of death in the fishes belly, and when he felt the anger of God in all this, as

an hell on earth, yet faith directs him to God, and when hee was as far (to his owne sense) from God and his favour, as hell is from heaven; hee looked on that but as an argument to move him, *to cry* the lowder. 3. As God can help in greatest distresses: so the prayers of the children of God in their deep afflictions, flowing from real indigence and need, will get a good answer; for *Jonah*'s faith, strengthned of God, saw the one, when in *affliction and out of the belly of hel he cryed*, and in his experience he found the other, that he prayed not in vaine; *He heard me.* Prayer speedeth best, when felt necessity instructs the sincerity of it; and when it is spoken out of the dust, then faith will by prayer bring help from heaven to one little better then in hell. 4. The Lords seasonable answering of his peoples needy desires in their extremity, will not onely ease their griefes, but be refreshfull afterward, to think much upon it, as appeareth in his repeating and dwelling upon this mercy; *I cryed and he heard me*, twice over, and the oftner he lookes on it, sees the more in it; *That his voice should be heard from the belly of hell*; and the more it be thought on, it ought to inlarge our hearts the more with affection toward God, as is imported in his directing of his speech at last to God; *Thou heardest my voice*: as one overcome with the kindnesse of God in it.

**Ver. 3.** *For thou hadst cast me into the deep in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows, and thy waves passed over me.*

*Jonah* is not content to have spoken so briefly of so rich a purpose, but to the end that he may glorifie the grace and mercy of God, in supporting him in his strait, and delivering him from it, and that he may edifie the Church, hee enlargeth the Narration, and speakes more particularly of every step of it. And first, he sheweth the greatnesse of his tryall, in that he had to doe with an angry God, pursuing him in anger, who had taken and cast him into the sea, and into the depth and midst of it, where waves of seas without, and of tentations within, overwhelmed him; *Hence learne.* 1. Serious thoughts and apprehensions of trouble, are needfull, not onely when we are in it, for stirring us up to prayer, but when delivered also, to set forth the greatnesse of mercy, for all this variety of expressions in setting out his trouble; *Thou hast cast me into the depth, in the midst*

of

*of the ſeas &c.* tend to this purpoſe, to ſhew that it had ſet him on edge; *I cried, for thou hadſt caſt me, &c.* And to ſhew from how great danger he had been delivered, and what a mercy he thought it to be heard of God, even when hee was ſo dealing with him. 2. Much of God ſeen in our trouble, will hide thoſe from being too much eyed, who have been moſt inſtrumental and active in it; therefore there is no word of the Mariners, but, *Thou hadſt caſt me into the deep.* 3. Unto the childe of God afflictions are nothing to beare, in compariſon of Gods diſpleaſure, who afflicts, and of the tentations, which looking on him as a party doth raiſe; for his affliction is imbittered with this, *Thou* being angry, *hadſt caſt me into the Sea: all thy billowes, and thy waves,* (not onely raiſed by thee in the Sea, to purſue me a rebel, but tides of toſſing tentations, begotten by the ſenſe of thy diſpleaſure,) *paſſed over me*, ſo that hee could doe no more then be overwhelmed, and run downe with one of them after another. 4. It may comend the rich mercy of God toward his children, and furniſh rich matter of praiſe to him, that he ſuffers them not to quit him, but cauſeth them to follow him, when he ſeemeth to forſake them, and flee in to him, when he is purſuing in hot diſpleaſure; for, the ſcope of all this account of his trial and tentation, tends alſo to ſet forth the grace of God, that had enabled him to cry to him in all this extremity, it being the admirable power of faith, ſupported by grace; that he durſt call on an angry God, durſt follow after him when he went away, durſt lay hold of him when hee ſmote, and pray him to deſiſt from anger when he was threatning him with worſe, and durſt look and ſeek for better tidings, when he was run downe with the current and tide of tentations.

Ver 4. *Then I ſayd, I am caſt out of thy ſight, yet I will look againe toward thy holy temple.*

He rehearſeth further his exerciſe upon this trial, that there was a conflict betwixt unbeliefe and deſpair, concluding his rejection from Gods favour and care any more, and faith looking to God in heaven, and the Covenant made in Chriſt with the Elect (a ſigne whereof was his preſence on the Mercy-ſeat in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, toward which the godly were to direct their prayers, 1 *Kings* 8.) which gave him yet ground of hope. *Doct.* 1. It is the uſual lot of the Lords children, to have not

onely outward afflictions to wreſtle with, but ſpiritual tentations and ſad concluſions, gathered from their troubles, which are ſorer to endure then many ſimple afflictions; for, ſo was it with *Jonah*, while he was in the ſea. 2. The children of the Lord in their troubles, may be ſo toſſed and divided betwixt hope and deſpair, that faith and unbelief will be taking word about; for, ſo doth *Jonahs*, experience teach; *I ſaid, I am caſt out, yet will I looke again.* 3. In a time of tentation, unbeliefes word is ordinarily firſt out, till faith come and correct it; ordinarily what is ſaid in haſte is unbeliefes language, and to be un-ſaid again; for, this comes firſt out, *I am caſt out of thy ſight.* 4. A child of God may not only be aſſaulted with fits of deſpaire, but for a time be overcome with it, and yield to it, and yet for all that recover his feet again; for *Jonah* once concluded, and ſaid, *I am caſt out of thy ſight.* 5. As it is ordinary under tentation, to judge of all Gods reſpect, care and love, by our ſenſe of his preſent dealing: ſo to be caſt off by God, as one that he will not favour nor care for, nor take notice of, is the ſoreſt of trials, eſpecially to the childe of God, who lives by Gods favour, and is made up in all his afflictions, when he findes that God thinks on him, and that his troubles indear him to Gods care; for this is *Jonahs* apprehenſion and ſaddeſt complaint; *I am caſt out of thy ſight.* 6. It is no new thing to ſee a childe of God, and veſſel of mercy apprehending reprobation and rejection from God, in his ſad and darke houre; for, this alſo is *Jonahs* temptation. 7. Nor is it ſtrange to ſee the children of God exerciſed, and ſadly afflicted with that which hath never been, nor will be, ſave in their own feareful apprehenſions; for, ſo is *Jonah* with *caſting off.* When we reckon by our own deſervings, and by probabilyties in a ſtrait, and not by Gods love and all-ſufficiency, we cannot but draw ſad concluſions, and our own ſpirits will make us work enough. 8. Tentations, even when they have overcome for a ſeaſon, are not to be lien under, and given way to by the children of God, but ought to be reſiſted and ſet againſt, though they ſhould (if it were poſſible) periſh in the attempt, this being the way to honour God and get deliverance; for vanquiſhed *Jonah* will not quit it ſo; *Yet will I looke again.* 9. That whereby the children of the Lord muſt oppoſe all troubles inward and outward, and reſiſt tentations, is naked faith, cloſely adhering to the Covenant of grace made in Chriſt, and gathering hope of better dealing; this is imported in his *looking again toward the holy Temple,*

*Temple*, or eying God in his Covenant, whereof that was a ſigne. To caſt away confidence as uſeleſſe in a ſtrait, or not to eſſay faith till wee be hired by ſenſe, or to lie by in wilfull unbelief, thinking that is the way to get ſenſe, to looſe our doubts; or to ſeek any footing for faith but in Gods Covenant and free grace in Chriſt, is the height of folly. 10. The weakeſt act of faith may do much good in a day of greateſt need; For, in all this extremity *Ionah* had no more but a *looking again*, as a poor baniſhed man. 11. Faith in a time of need will finde a way through many a dark impediment to meet with God; Therefore *Ionah*, incloſed in the ſea, and not knowing where the Temple (toward which they were to pray) ſtood, will ſet faith at need to ſeek it out. 12. It ſpeaks much of Gods praiſe, that when his people are laid by with their tentations, yet hee will not loſe them, but recover them out of their deepeſt ſwounes, and make vanquiſhed faith yet again to triumph over difficulties, which they had judged inſuperable; For, this is alſo recorded to his praiſe, that not onely *Ionah* perſevered crying when his trouble was great, *ver.* 2,3. but that hee was ſtrengthened after hee had once yeelded to the tentation, to believe and *look again.*

Ver. 5. *The waters compaſſed me about, even to the ſoul, the depth cloſed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head.*

6. *I went down to the bottoms of the mountaines: the earth with her barres* was *about me for ever; yet haſt thou brought up my life from corruption; O LORD my God.*

He rehearſeth further how his tentation left him not ſo, but gathered ſtrength anew from his hopeleſſe condition in his trouble, ſeeing no deliverance, but as a condemned man caſt into the priſon of hel, for the waters (drunk in by the fiſh) or by himſelf before he got into the fiſh, or the huge ſea wherein he was endangered his life, and cloſed him in on every hand, and the ſea-weeds were wrapped about him, either when the fiſh ſwallowed them down, or when the fiſh went down with him among them; the fiſh went with him to the very bottome of the ſea, to the roots of the hills; and though he had got out of the fiſh, and could have ſwimmed out of the ſea, yet the ſteep rocks on that ſhore where

the fiſh ranged with him, as ſo many barres, would have held him as in a perpetual priſon. All which grounds of feare he here recordeth, to ſet forth the mercy of God; who when neither depth of ſea, nor ſteepneſſe of ſhore could allow him any hope, had brought him out in ſaftey, as if he had ben revived and brought out of the grave. *Doct.* 1. It is no unuſual trial of a child of God under tentation, after he hath reſolved to adhere to God, and hope in him, not to get his reſolution followed, but by caſting his eye upon his trouble, and poring on it, to judg himſelfe yet to be in a hopeleſſe condition, and that he hath been a fool ever to think otherwiſe; and for all this he may yet be happy: For *Jonah* now delivered, gives an account, how after his reſolution to beleeve, *ver.* 4. tentation ſet upon him again, and made him conclude himſelf a loſt man, and a perpetuall priſoner. 2. The ſenſe of an afflicted and ſad condition is not ſoon to be forgotten, but to be kept freſh, and carried along with every ſight of mercy: therefore did the Lord ſuffer *Jonah* to take a ſecond view of his condition, and *Jonah* by his rehearſall of it, teſtifieth that he is yet more ſenſible what he had been without Gods help. 3. The more we ſtudie the difficulties of our afflicted conditions, we will ſtill ſee more reaſons wherefore wee ſhould admire and magnifie the Lord in his delivering of us: For, after his former ſenſible ſight of his troubles, *ver.* 3. when hee takes this other view of it, hee ſees yet more (as trouble without eying of God is endleſly difficult) of impoſſiblities to be delivered without God. 4. It is the Lords way with his people to let them ſee their difficulties to be paſt hope and irrecoverable, before hee appear for them, that he may be the more eminently ſeen; for, *Jonahs* aggravation of his trouble from hazard of life, depth of ſeas, and ſteepneſſe of ſhore, doth import that in his eys deliverance was impoſſible. 5. Whatever be the fears and apprehenſions of Saints under their troubles, yet in due time all that they will have to ſay of greateſt trials, is, that they have made way for Gods manifeſting himſelf in them: therefore is that ſweet return ſubjoyned to his hopeleſſe trouble; *Yet haſt thou brought up my life.* 6. Albeit the Lord would have his people enjoying an eſcape in the midſt of their trouble, in living by faith, and will have faith tryed, how it will follow its look; yet it is his way alſo when he ſees it fit, and hath tryed their faith, to refute all their doubtfull thoughts with reall deliverance: therefore after the former breathing, *ver* 4. and *Jonah*'s freſh aſſault, hee gets actuall deliverance to end the controverſie. 7. The Lord can give deliverance

liverance fom deadly extremities, and can reſtore his people in ſafety, and their mercies to them, when they are no better in their own eyes then dead and rotten in their graves; *For thou haſt brought up my life from corruption*: that is, his body from the fiſhes belly, where it was as in a grave ready to rot, and his ſoule from thoſe terrours that would haue conſumed him. 8. In Gods working for his people much of his power, and love is to be ſeen and acknowledged: This is imported in that ſweet compellation, *O Lord my God.* The Lord, who hath brought him out of deaths pangs: and his God who had reſpected him in this low and guilty condition.

Ver. 7. *When my ſoule fainted within me, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy Temple.*

*Ionahs* exerciſe and deliverance is againe ſummed up in this, that when his ſpirit was ready to faint under a burthen of affliction and terrours of conſcience, he calling God to minde, found incouragement to pray, and got audience. *Learn hence,* 1. The ſpirits of men, how ſtout and couragious ſoever, yet being left alone in trouble and tentation, will ſoone be overthrown and faint; for, *his ſoule fainted,* (or was overwhelmed with anxiety,) *within him.* 2. Before the Lord doe for his people, he uſes to lay them, and all their courage once by, that he may ſtaine the pride of all glory, and no fleſh may glory in his preſence; for, ſaith he, *my ſoule fainted within me.* 3. Much unbelief and diſcouragement flowes from our infirmity and weakeneſſe, in not fixing our hearts to meditate on God, caſting off other perplexing thoughts, which we cannot reſolve, and in not pondering ſeriouſly what God is and wil be to his people, or hath at any time been unto our ſelves; therefore his remedy and antidote againſt fainting is, *I remembred the Lord.* 4. Remembring, and ſerious apprehenſion of God by faith, is a notable encouragement to prayer, and gives a good account of prayers ſucceſſe; whereas to the miſbelievers ſenſe his prayers wander and go he knowes not whither; *I remembered the Lord and my prayer came in unto thee.* 5. Gods mercy is to be much ſeen and magnified in his anſwering of his peoples prayers in their diſtreſſe; *My prayer,* ſaith he, *Came into thy holy Temple*; that is into heaven the habitation

bitation of thy holinesse, where it was a wonder such a rebels prayers should be admitted, and were accepted by vertue of the Covenant and Promise made in Christ, not for any worth in them. 6. Gods manifestation of himself in any place calls for holinesse, therefore is not only heaven, but the Temple at *Jerusalem* called, *Thy holy Temple*, or *the Temple of thine holinesse*; because not only he is holy, but his presence there calls for holinesse in all that approach unto him. 7. To be delivered from fainting in trouble, and to get accesse unto God by prayer, is the childe of Gods greatest mercy in trouble, as speaking special love, whatever his outward issue be: therefore doth *Jonah* so much insist in commending this mercy of enlargement of soul and support, *ver.* 2, 4, and 7.

**Ver. 8.** *They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy.*

From all this his exercise and deliverance, he gathers some Conclusions by way of instruction and use from it; and first, he gives out his verdict of all by-wayes, as depriving man of true happinesse, and disapointing him in the end: by which we are not only to understand the courses of grosse Idolaters, but more generally all courses which men lay down for attaining happinesse in any thing beside God: and particularly his own former folly and rebellion, wherein, imagining to have found happinesse and content, he by the contrary ran quite from it, and plunged himself in misery, *Doct.* 1. The experience of Saints, from many changes and variety of conditions, ought to imprint in their hearts more serious and settled thoughts concerning true happinesse, and the right way of attaining it; therfore *Jonah* thus exercised and daunted, gathers this Conclusion as a certain Truth, *They that observe, &c.* 2. All things beside God when they are not made use of (if lawful,) for the end for which God appointed them, but happinesse sought in them, or confidence placed on them; and all wayes and courses beside these prescribed of God, will not be able to answer the expectation of the creature, but being observed as mans happiness, they are vanities in regard of their emptinesse to supply the creatures need, or to satisfie its desires; and *lying vanities*, in regard that for the present, if we be not attentive, they delude us with a vain shew and in the issue doe miserably disappoint. 3. Albeit things

stand

ſtand thus; yet men are ſo deluded and doated, that they will place their confidence, and look for happineſs in thoſe things which will diſappoint them; for, there are *who obſerve* (with all eſtimation, care and expectation depend upon, and purſue after) *lying vanities*. 4. Men by their purſuing happineſſe not in God, nor in his way, do indeed deprive themſelves of happineſs, and conſequently run upon their own ruine; Therefore ſuch do *forſake mercy*; for as happineſs is only to be found in God: ſo they who follow vain courſes, do in effect renounce and forſake God, who will not be joyned with Idols, and withal is provoked to plague ſuch things as we put in his roome. 5. The portion of ſuch as ſeek happineſſe in God and in his way only, is mercy, and what mercy (in ſo all-ſufficient a God) can afford. Therefore men taking another way, *forſake mercy*, that is, their happineſs, flowing from the infinite mercy of God: all happineſſe to loſt man being mercies gift. 6. Men by forſaking of God can take nothing from him, but all the prejudice redounds to themſelves; for, *they forſake their owne mercy*, but do not deprive him of happineſſe. 7. Men in their forſaking of God or his way, can have no juſt challenge or ground of exception againſt him, as putting them away, but muſt take all the blame upon themſelves; for it is *their own mercy* which they forſake; *their own*, I ſay, by offer; for God, notwithſtanding his ſecret purpoſe, yet ſecludeth not any from mercy to whom the offer is made, till they ſeclude themſelves.

Verſ. 9. *But I will ſacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving, I wil pay that that I have vowed: ſalvation is of the* LORD.

The ſecond concluſion that *Jonah* gathers, is, that ſeeing the Lord had thus in his folly reclaimed him, and in his deep diſtreſſe delivered him, he will teſtifie his thankfulneſſe by offering praiſe, and performing what he had vowed in his trouble, and will learne by this experience, that deliverance can be expected from God only, and may be expected from him. *Doct.* 1. Received mercies call for praiſe at the Receivers hand, as a teſtimony of his thankfulneſs for the mercie, and of his eſtimation of God who gave it, and as a means ſpeeding in new ſtraits: for, *Jonah*, thus delivered, *will ſacrifice, &c.* 2. The Lords croſſing and afflicting us in our wandrings till we be

brought

brought back to obey the will of God, is to bee acknowledged as a mercy, and matter of praiſe; for, ſuch is the ſubject of *Jonah's* ſong, compared with the former verſe; he will bleſſe the Lord not onely for deliverance, but, that (though to his own coſt) he had not been permitted to proſper in a wrong way. 3. Praiſe is that true ſacrifice pointed at in the law, by the thankſgiving-offerings in the Temple; therefore doth hee give unto praiſe the name of what ſhadowed it out, *I will ſacrifice with the voice of thankſgiving.* See *Hebrews* 13. 15. 4. The truly godly under the law were taught of God, not to reſt upon theſe outward performances and offerings, but to preſſe and ſeek after the ſpiritual duty and ſubſtance, and to make uſe of Chriſt in whom alone even our beſt morall actions are accepted; therefore doth hee hold forth that *the voice of thankſgiving* (or affectionate praiſe) was the *ſacrifice* indeed. See *Pſal.* 69. 30, 31. *Hoſ.* 14. 2. And withall the joyning of ſacrifice with the voice of thankſgiving, ſheweth, that his praiſe was offered up in and by that true ſacrifice. 5. The Lords people in their afflictions and deliverances, will be made to ſee great neceſſity of making vowes, and binding themſelves more firmely to their duty; for, *Jonah* in his trouble had vowed, *that that I have vowed*; which was a binding of himſelfe with his owne conſent more accurately to obſerve and follow the will, and Commandements of the Lord: the reaſon of which ingagement is, becaeſe they will find when it comes to ſtrait, much ſhort comming, and little fervour in their ordinary walking, which needs upſtirring; they will find alſo much obligation layd upon them, by the Lords mercifull remembring of them in trouble, voluntarily to take on his yoke; and much ſenſe of their owne inſtability, needing ſuch bonds and tyes. 6. It is the duty of the Lords children, being delivered, not to forget their condition in trouble, nor their reſolutions and obligations following thereupon, as if once being out of trouble, they were out of Gods reverence, but to ſtudy to walk anſwerably in their calme day, to that they reſolved upon in greateſt extremity; therefore, ſaith *Jonah*, *I will pay that that I have vowed.* 7. Salvation and deliverance of all kindes is Gods perogative royal; none can ſave, or give peace when hee commands trouble, and he hath the prererogative to ſave and deliver, when reaſon, probability, the ſentence of the law, and all things elſe have condemned and given over for loſt, and in deſpite of all oppoſition whatſoever. And it is the duty of ſuch as have had any experience of this, to cleave to it as an undeniable truth in

all

al following extremities: For, *Jonah* having found this in his present case, layes it down as a fixed ground of faith in all extremities, that *salvation is of the Lord*: the force of the *Hebrew* word comprehending salvation, both temporal and eternal.

Vers. 10. *And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.*

In the last part of the Chapter, *Jonah*, after his miraculous support by faith, rehearseth the way of his deliverance, that the Lord by his effectual providence (as by a commanding speech) made the fish to vomit him out upon the Land. *Whence learn*: 1. The Lord, by the afflictions of his people, is but schooling and bettering them, and not seeking to destroy them; whereof he can give proofe in setting them in freedome and safety from deadly dangers and extremities: For, *Jonah* being humbled, *The Lord spake to the fish, and it vomited out* Jonah, *&c.* 2. The most insensible of creatures have an ear to their Makers speech, and do (at least by obediential subjection) obey his will; and will not hinder but help forward his purposes of love towards his people: for, *The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out* Jonah *upon the dry Land.* 3. In the ordinary paths and motions of creatures, God may be bringing about especial purposes and providences; as this fish is made to *vomit out* and deliver *Jonah*, when it is minding no such thing, but tumbling to and again; much more may it be so in the ordinary wayes of men, as in *Ioseph's* going to *Bethlehem*, *Luke* 2. 4, 5, 6, compared with *Mat.* 2. 5, 6.

## CHAP. III.

IN this Chapter we have, first, *Jonah's* second calling to go to *Nineveh*, and his obedience in going thither, and denouncing Gods judgement against them, to *verse* 5. 2. The succesle of his preaching there, appearing in a general and solemn Humiliation countenanced

tenanced and enjoyned by authority, to *verſ.* 13. 3. The Lords acceptance hereof, and revoking of the ſentence given out againſt them, *verſ.* 12.

Ver. 1. *AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the ſecond time, ſaying,*

2. *Ariſe, go unto Nineveh that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.*

*Jonah* being now humbled for his rebellion, and delivered from his affliction, is again called to go and preach againſt *Nineveh*, it being needful to have his calling repeated, leſt if he had gone on the firſt call, which he had diſobeyed, it might have fared with him as with *Iſrael*, who reſenting their own diſobedience would go up to the Land, but without the Lord, *Num.* 14. 40, 41. *Deut.* 1. As ſin doth juſtly deprive men of all their privileges which they enjoy of Gods free favour; ſo a true penitent will not only obtain pardon, but may alſo be reſtored to his former forefaulted dignities; for *Jonah* is not deprived of his Prophetick office of which he was ſo careleſſe, *Chap.* 1. 3. but, *the word of the Lord came unto him.* 2. No endeavours of ſtrugglings of men will free them from ſuch ſervices and lots, as God hath to imploy them in, and exerciſe them withal; for, *Jonah*, reſiſting the firſt call, is brought to obey on his own charges, *The word of the Lord came unto* Jonah *the ſecond time*, and his duty which he had refuſed, is enjoyned him again. 3. The ſervants of the Lord ought to ſtick cloſe by their commiſſion, and faithfully to publiſh it, without adding or diminiſhing; for, ſo is *Jonah* commanded, *Go unto that great city, and preach the preaching that I bid thee.*

Verſ. 3. *So Jonah aroſe, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD; now Nineveh was an exceeding great City of three dayes journey.*

4. *And Jonah began to enter into the city a dayes journey, and he cryed and ſaid, Yet forty dayes and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.*

In

In the next place we have *Ionah*'s obedience, wherein also is recorded a deſcription of the greatneſſe of *Nineveh*, which was of three dayes journey in circuite, or if one would go through all the ſtreets of it; and a brief ſum of his preaching, which for a whole day (going from place to place, as God directed him) or going through a third of the City (it being in whole three dayes journey) he proclaimed; whereby we are neither to underſtand that he preached no more of the cauſes procuring this judgment, or of God, in whoſe name he threatened, but that the reſult of all was, that *Nineveh* was to be deſtroyed; nor yet that he preached no longer, nor in any more of the City during the forty dayes: but the meaning is, that before he got any further, his word took effect with thoſe that heard it, and by their means, with the reſt of the City, as appeares, *ver.* 5, 6. *Hence learn*, 1. Obedience to God in a calling and commanded duty, is a ſure evidence of an humbled man; for, *Ionah* before rebellious, now *aroſe and went to* Nineveh. 2. It is our duty to obey the will of God, not becauſe of our inclination, but with an eye to his command, to whom our wils and inclinations ought to ſtoop; unto whom we ſhould ſtudy to approve our ſelves in all things, and from whom we may expect help in following his way; for, *Ionah* went to *Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord*, as being now taught to look more to God's will then to his own. 3. Gods ſervants following his Commandment, and truſting in him, have been and will be enabled to oppoſe and denounce vengeance againſt the wickedneſs of greateſt perſons or places; for, albeit *Nineveh was an exceeding great city, &c.* yet *Ionah cried* with zeal and courage, *and ſaid, &c.* 4. God is able to reach and utterly overthrow greateſt perſons or places, when he proſecutes a controverſie againſt them; for *Ionah* in his name denounces, that *Nineveh* that great city *ſhall be overthrown.* 5. The Lord oftentimes ſees it fit in great wiſdome to conceal any thoughts of love toward a people, and hold out only threatnings and ſeverity to induce them more ſeriouſly to repent: for this cauſe is the ſentence abſolute, *Yet forty dayes and* Nineveh *ſhall be overthrowne*, without any mention of a condition, that upon their repentance they ſhould be ſpared, as afterward he did; only the granting forty days unto them, carries an invitation to repentance in the boſome of it.

Ver.

Vers. 5. *So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a Fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.*

6 *For word came unto the King of Nineveh, and he arose from his Throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered* him *with sackcloth, and sate in ashes.*

7. *And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh (by the decree of the King and his nobles) saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water.*

8. *But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every man from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.*

The successe of *Ionah*'s preaching among the *Ninevites*, is, their receiving of the message; and humbling of themselves before God, which being generally held forth in the 5. *verse*, is more fully enlarged in the following purpose; that the King hearing of this threatning, (belike before *Ionah* came unto him) in his own person set about the duty of humiliation, and by his Authority with his Nobles ordained a publick Fast, wherein not only rational creatures, but even beasts (which they used to deck in the time of peace) should for a time be deprived of food, and clothed with sackcloth, that so by this sad sight men might be set on edge to cry fervently unto God, and that with their repentance they should joyn Reformation of their evil wayes and oppression. Albeit it cannot be said, that all those who were employed in this exercise had true faith and repentance unto conversion (as neither can it be aledged that none were really converted, for *Ionah* did preach much in forty dayes to them (having in shorter time taught the Mariners much) yet considering that Christ calleth it *Repentance*, Matth. 12.41. we may safely conclude that there was no grosse dissimulation in it, but that at least they had legal faith and contrition. *Doct.* 1. The Word of the Lord may, when he

he accompanieth it, have ſtrange and ſpeedy effects among ſuch as men would look for very little from; for, when *Iſrael* are deſpiſing the word, *Nineveh* is ſet on work by it, and that ſo ſpeepily as before *Ionah* had got through the city, *verſ.* 4. the work is begun, and report from hearers only ſets others on work. *Word came to the King, and he aroſe from his throne, &c.* 2. To belive the truth of Gods Word, when it is ſpoken, is the ready way to make it effectual, and have place; it being ordinarily ſlighted, becauſe it is not credited; Therefore *Ninevehs* reformation begins at this, *The people of* Nineveh *believed.* 3. What is ſpoken by meſſengers in the Name of the Lord, muſt be taken up as Gods ſpeech before it can be effected; therefore *the people of* Nineveh hearing *Ionah, believed God,* in whoſe Name he ſpake. 4. Extraordinary cauſes of a people under wrath imminent or incumbent for ſinne, call them to extraordinary courſes and remedies for averting the ſame; therefore the *Ninevites* in this ſtrait, count it not ſufficient to uſe an ordinary way of dealing with God but *proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth, &c.* 5. In a time of great extremity it becoms thoſe, who would approve themſelves to God, ſo to carry themſelves, as may teſtifie moſt ſenſe of the deſert of ſin, their abjection and low condition before the Lord, and ſo as may ſtir us up to earneſt prayer; Theſe things contained in the Kings edict of covering with ſackcloath, and withholding food from man and beaſt, tended to theſe ends; for hereby they declare, how all ſorts had offended God, and abuſed the creatures unto ſinne; they teſtifie alſo their ſenſe of their own deſerving, that the Lord might cut them all off, and their beaſts for their ſake, and that becauſe of this, they were in an abject and deplorable condition in their own eyes; and withal, by this mournful face of all things, they would ſtir up themſelves to intreat the face of the Lord. As for the external performances, as they were never of any worth, but abominable, if they were reſted upon without the ſubſtance: ſo they (eſpecially that of ſackcloth) were more called for under the ſhadows of the Law, when the Promiſes were not ſo clear as under the Goſpel, and when people were trained on to their duty by that Pædagogie; and as abſtinence is ſtil required in ſolemn humiliations in ſo far as may be ſubſervient to ſpiritual duties, ſo it might be more practiſed in warm Countries then in colder Climats. 6. A lively ſenſe of Gods authority and of his wrath kindling againſt ſin, may make a King quit his throne and robes, and take a place

in the duſt with the meaneſt of his ſubjects, to deprecate the anger of God; for, *The King of* Nineveh *aroſe from his Throne, and laid his robes from him, and covered him with ſackcloth, and ſate in aſhes.* 7. Kings are obliged, not only by their Authority, but by their example alſo, to promote Piety among their ſubjects; for, the people having informed the King, he in his own perſon *aroſe from his Throne, &c.* and by his Authority *cauſed it to be proclaimed and publiſhed, &c.* Authority and Law without example will not avail ſo much. 8. Albeit men in Authority cannot compel the conſciences of their ſubjects unto faith and obedience, yet they may by their Authority enjoyne them to perform the external duties of Religion; for, *the King of* Nineveh *made a proclamation and Decree* to this purpoſe, whereby he did teſtifie his own repentance, and promote it in others. 9. Men in higheſt Authority are not to rule and do all by themſelves, but with the advice and concurrence of thoſe who ought to have Authority next unto them: for, *He cauſed to be proclaimed by the Decree of the King and his Nobles.* So much did theſe Heathens ſee of humane frailty, even in the greateſt of men needing ſuch aſſiſtance. 10. All external ceremonies and performances of Faſting and putting on of ſackcloth, are no ſufficient means of averting the anger of God, except there be fervent prayer to God; therefore it is ſubjoyned in the Decree, *And cry mightily to God*; all theſe other performances ought to ſtir up to that as the kernel. 11. Prayer, though never ſo apparently fervent, is not acceptable without an endeavour of Reformation. Therefore are they alſo exhorted and enjoyned to *turne every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.* Their Idolatry (being convinced of the true God) may be comprehended in that general *of evil wayes*; and they name *violence* in particular, in regard that all men by nature are more clear in Duties of the Second Table then of the Firſt.

Ver. 9. *Who can tell* if *God will turn and repent, and turne away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?*

The exhortation and injunction in the decree, is ſeconded from this motive and incouragement, that there was ſome hope, though much born down, that the Lord being inſtantly ſought unto

unto, would be reconciled with them, and in his mercy avert his judgment. *Doct.* 1. There may be some sight of Gods mercy, even when he is peremptorily threatning, attained to by such as are sensible of sin, and acknowledge the justice of Gods correction; for, notwithstanding *Ionah's* preaching, *ver.* 4. there is here a possibility seen of *Gods turning and repenting* even by those who apprehend his *fierce anger*; *who can tell if God will turn, &c?* The very taking paines to threaten and warne forty dayes before he executed, might give ground for such an hope, that there was some purpose of love kept up, till he saw their repentance. 2. Sensible sinners under fears of felt judgments, look on Gods being reconciled with them as the fountain of their happiness, and from that only can they expect any comfortable issue of their calamities; therefore their eye is chiefly upon Gods *turning, repenting, and turning away from his fierce anger*; from which only they can gather hope that they *shall not perish.* 3. Such as are most earnest with God, under the sense of sin and judgments, will be ready to see most of his grace and free love in shewing favour toward them; therefore all their hope, when they cry mightily, is built *on Gods turning and repenting*, and quitting the controversie, and that grace and compassion must be eminently active, if the peace be made up at all. 4. This way of speech, *Who can tell if God will turne? &c.* used likewise by the Church in like extremities, *Ioel* 2. 14. doth hold out, 1. That sensible sinners may have many sad tossings betwixt the expectation of Gods mercy, and the sense of their own deservings, so that albeit the Promise be most absolute to such, yet they can neither speak the pure language of faith, nor yet wholly the language of unbelief, but mixed and made up of both. Therefore albeit it be beyond all controversie that God will be reconciled with a penitent; and no doubt *Ionah* had preached so much concerning God, yet they can attain no further then, *Who can tell if God will turn? &c.* 2 As it is no small difficulty to get free from a stroak, where provocations are great, and God hath entered in processe, and severely threatned; and as God is not alwayes pleased upon repentance to keep off temporal afflictions, when iniquity is come to an height; so exemption from them is to be looked for by the penitent, with very great submission, considering his guilt; and that happinesse is not to be placed therein, if God otherwise be reconciled: therefore doth this suspended hope look chiefly (not so much to remission, as) to temporal preservation, that

God *may turne away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not.* 3. The Lord, by keeping our mindes in ſuſpenſe, betwixt hope and diſcouragement, would ſtir up to more diligence; therefore is this doubtfull hope ſubjoyned as a reaſon why they ſhould *crie mightily to God*; and reforme their wayes, *ver.* 8. 4 Such as are convinced of ſin ought not to be deterred from duty, though it ſeemed never ſo hopeleſſe, but ought to reſolve to follow it, get what they will; therefore they will cry to God, though they bee not certaine of deliverance.

**Ver.** 10. *And God ſaw their workes, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid that he would doe unto them, and he did* it *not.*

God is graciouſly pleaſed to accept of this, and recalleth the ſentence which is expreſſed in termes taken from amongſt men. *Whence learne,* 1. The Lords moſt peremptory and abſolute threatenings are alwayes ſo to be underſtood, as that the penitent may look for Gods acceptance; for, notwithſtanding the abſolute threatning, *ver.* 4. *God ſaw their workes, and repented.* 2. God doth chiefly take notice of and reward mens practices, and real endeavours of reformation, and not their external performances of religious exerciſes; for, *God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil way*, rather then their faſting and ſackcloth. 3. Albeit the Lord be not debtor to any, nor can they merit at his hand, yet free grace will ſo reward weak endeavours, as may encourage all to ſeek him; yea, he will reward with temporal favours, even temporary repentance, as an image of true repentance, to ſhew how he loves, and of grace would reward true repentance; for, *He ſaw their works, and repented, &c.* both the works of thoſe who were truely converted, and of thoſe who came not to that length. 4. When God is ſaid in Scripture to *repent*, we are not to conceive any change in God, or of his eternal purpoſes, but onely a not executing of his revealed threatning, which includes the exception of repentance, which God decrees to give thoſe whom he ſpares; for, *Gods repenting of the evill, &c.* is expounded to be, *He did it not.* Not a changing of his purpoſe, but a not executing of what *he ſaid*, to wit, conditionally.

CHAP. IV.

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THis Chapter containeth, 1. *Jonahs* murmuring at Gods dealing with *Nineveh*, and his wiſh to be dead, *verſe* 1, 2, 3, 4. The Lords reproving of him; firſt, by words, *verſe* 4. and then by deed; for by a Gourd, in the ſhadow whereof (being gone out of the City,) he delighted, *verſe* 5, 6. and at the want whereof hee repined, *verſe* 7, 8, 9. he is reproved, that he ſhould be ſo much taken up with ſo ſmal a thing, and yet bee angry at Gods ſparing ſo populous a City, *verſe* 10, 11.

Ver. 1. *BUt it diſpleaſed Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.*

2. *And he prayed unto the LORD, and ſaid, I pray thee, O LORD,* was *not this my ſaying, when I was yet in my countrey? Therefore I fled before unto Tarſhiſh; for I knew that thou* art *a gracious God, and mercifull, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſſe, and repenteſt thee of the evil.*

JOnah is diſcontented with this mercy of God toward *Nineveh*, and expoſtulates with him about it, applauding himſelfe in his former rebellion as having done more wiſely in it, then in following Gods Call: The ground of all which diſtemper was (as appeares,) that God ſparing of *Nineveh* (which it ſeemes he knew by Revelation, or gathered from their repentance, or from the ſtanding of the City after the forty dayes were expired) was a ready meanes as he thought to make his Miniſtry, and Gods Name and Authority to be vilipended; or, (as tentation is full of invention) that ſuch an enemy as they were to be to the people of God, was not cut off. *Doct.* 1. Corruptions may lurk and remaine alive, in thoſe who have gone through many ſtraits, and ſo might have had them mortified; for, *Jonah* after many difficulties, is yet paſsionate and impatient; *He was diſpleaſed exceedingly, and very angry.* 2. It

is a great iniquity in the children of men, to ſeeke to have Gods diſpenſations framed after the molde of their minde; for it is *Ionah*'s ſin, to be *very angry and exceedingly diſpleaſed* with what God did. 3. Corruption may ſometimes ſo prevaile with the children of God, that it ſhall not only be a tentation ſmothered, out of love to him, within their breſt, but may alſo break out with their own conſent againſt God for a ſeaſon: for *Ionah* vents his paſſion, *He prayed unto the Lord and ſaid.* 4. Much of that which we vent under the name of prayer, may indeed be our raving in our Feavers, and a letting looſe our corruption and paſſion; for, that is called *prayer* here, which in effect is a bitter expoſtulation with God, and a venting of his paſſionate deſire to die. 5. Crooked wayes, for which the people of God have been corrected, and which they have been made to condemn, may yet again in an houre of tentation be approved and liked of by them; for, *Ionah* applauds himſelf in his former way of rebellion which he had condemned, *Chap.* 2. 8. and thinks he had done well; *Was not this my ſaying? &c. therefore I fled, &c.* 6. It is a tentation inſident to *Adams* poſterity, to preſume that they would guide things better, if they had their will, then God doth guide them; for, this expoſtulation implies, that he thought it had been better to have gone on to *Tarſhiſh*, then to have come to *Nineveh*, as things went. 7. A perſon under tentation will not want his own fair pretences, wherewith he may think to juſtifie his way, and to make it ſpecious and ſeem reaſonable; for, *Ionah* ſeemes to have ſuch reaſons, that he dare appeale to God himſelf, whether he foreſaw not wel in his own Countrey, that Gods mercy would make his threatning to be in vain, and bring his Miniſtry in contempt, and did not wel in flying; *was not this my ſaying*, ſaith he to God? but our reaſonings muſt ſubmit to gods ſovereign wil, and give place to his infinite wiſdom. 8. The mercy of God toward loſt man, is ſo farre beyond mans mercy, that it may ſometimes be a diſcontent to his tendereſt children, in that he is ſo merciful; for, Gods mercy to *Nineveh*, and that he is ſo *gracious and merciful, &c.* is *Ionah*'s eye-ſore. 9. God is ſo gracious, that as he is not eaſily provoked by ſinners; ſo he is eaſily, when provoked, reconciled againe unto them; for, this *Ionah* knew in his own countrey, that he was a *gracious God, and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſſe, and repented of the evil:* and this did he now ſee veryfied. 10. It is a great miſtake to think that mercy manifeſted to humble ſinners ſhould make them con-

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temne God or his ſervants, it being a moſt effectual meanes to produce feare of God, and reſpect to his ordinances and meſſengers, *Pſal.* 130.4. Therefore is *Jonah*'s reaſoning againſt Gods mercy grounded on a miſtake, and an evidence of his being carried headlong with paſſion.

Ver 3. *Therefore now, O LORD, take I beſeech thee my life from me: for it is better for me to dye then to live.*

*Jonah* ſubjoynes to his expoſtulation an impatient wiſh, that God would take him away by death, ſince hee got not his will, and could not endure the infamy, which he apprehended would come upon him *Whence learne,* 1. Death, (not as it is a releaſement from ſin, or a chariot to convey us to the place where we will be with God for ever, but as it takes away from a preſent imagined or real bitterneſſe) is the ordinary refuge of imbittered ſpirits, and the back-doore unto which, out of impatiency, wearineſſe of life, pride and conteſt with providence, they ſeek; therefore doth *Jonah* now pray, *Take my life from me.* 2. It is the fruit and the evidence of an imbittered ſpirit, that any condition, how ill ſoever, ſeemes better then the preſent caſe unto them; therefore *Jonah* thinkes it *better to dye then live,* without any affectionate eye to glory, but rather having reſpect to his reſt from preſent trouble, (as appeares from Gods reproving of it,) whereas it ought rather to have affrighted him to think of going out of the world in ſuch a bitter frame. 3. The children of God under tentation, may be very ardent in expreſſing the droſſe of their owne heart, and in ſeeking that which is altogether wrong; for, *Jonah* in his paſſion *beſeeches* the Lord to take away his life. Great is the mercy of Saints, in having a Mediatour to reforme their petitions. 4. It is a ſign af great corruption and ſelfe-love in men, to ſeek their own contentment and ſatisfaction in dying or living, rather then in theſe to be ſubject to the Will of God; and it is baſeneſſe and cowardiſe, to ſeek paſſionately to be out of this life, becauſe of any trouble we may meet with in it, in our following of God; for, ſuch is *Jonah*'s infirmity, and this is his reaſon in his paſſion: take my life from me; *For it is better for mee to dye then to live.*

Ver. 4. *Then ſaid the* LORD, *Doeſt thou well to be angry?*

The Lord doth firſt reprove *Ionah*'s paſsion by Word, and appeals to himſelfe, whether he thought it ſeemly ſo to repine? *Doct.* 1. The Lord doth in great meekneſſe and patience beare with the infirmities of his ſervants while they are in a diſtemper, and while there is hope of recovery; ſo much doth this gentle reproofe of great paſsion and ſtubbornneſſe teach. And ſo the mercy of God which he envied, that it ſhould be ſhewed to *Nineveh*, is the cauſe of his owne ſafety. 2. Gentle reproofs from God, and his tender dealing with his children, ought to take deepeſt impreſsion upon them: for, therefore doth the Lord chooſe this way, that *Ionah*, ſeeing therein his goodneſſe toward him, who was ſo often out of courſe, might be the more deeply convinced. 3. The children of God, when they cool of their fits, will be moſt ſevere againſt themſelves for their impatiency and miſcarriage; therefore doth the Lord appeal to *Ionah* himſelfe being ſober, to judge of his owne way: *Doeſt thou wel to be angry*? as being the fitteſt Judge to paſſe an hard cenſure upon himſelfe. 4. It is a great iniquity and preſumption in the creature to be angry at, or quarrel with any of Gods wayes, who is abſolute and unſearchably deep in his counſels: for, ſaith he, *Doeſt thou* (a worme, a potſheard, and an owle, who canſt not diſcerne my wayes) *wel to be angry*?

Ver. 5. *So Ionah went out of the city, and ſate on the Eaſt-ſide of the City, and there made him a booth, and ſate under it in the ſhadow, till he might ſee what would become of the City.*

*Ionah* not pacified with this reproofe, perſeveres in his humour, and goeth forth of the City, and eaſeth himſelfe the beſt he may from the Sunnes heat, till hee yet ſee what may become of the City. *Whence learne,* 1. A child of God under tentations may be very hard to convince of his errour; and may go on in his courſe, even when God reproves him for it; for *Ionah* thus reproved, *verſe* 4. goeth on, and is intent upon the ruine of the City. 2. Inordinate affections may not onely carry men to ſhew themſelves in oppoſition to the Will of God, but is a ready

way

way to draw them to deluſion, while as men will not believe truth, but according as they fancy and wiſh, ſo will they ſtill expect and look that things ſhould be; for, the forty dayes being expired, and *Ionah* being informed of Gods Will, yet expecteth the ſatisfying of his deſire; ***He went out to ſee what would become of the City***; as judging poſſibly, that ſince the preciſe day of *Nineveh*'s ruine, after the forty dayes, was not fixed, therefore they might periſh yet, or that poſſibly they would give over their repenting; or, that Gods ſentence being formerly altered, ſo might his purpoſe of mercy be. 3. Even the children of God, in the houre of tentation, may vent ſuch diſpoſitions as are monſtrous among men; ſo much of old *Adam* is there in the moſt mortified, and ſo much need is there to pray, that we be not led into tentation: for, whereas *Ionah*, a Prophet, ought to have rejoyced at the ſucceſſe of his Miniſtry, and the repentance of ſinners, his mind is only bent upon the deſtruction of Penitents, and it is his great eye-ſore to ſee that City ſtanding; ***He ſate to ſee what became of it***, as daily wiſhing its deſtruction, and grieving that he ſaw it not. 4. Smaller contentments and accommodations are to be choſen, rather then greater delights, by abiding in a place where Gods judgements are imminent, therefore doth *Ionah*, who expected and wiſhed the ruine of *Nineveh*, well in this reſpect, that he will rather ***ſit under the ſhadow of a Booth***, then abide in the City. By which alſo the Ninevites might take occaſion to repent yet more ſeriouſly, ſeeing his removal might tell what he expected.

Ver. 6. *And the* LORD *God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a ſhadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.*

7. *But God prepared a worme when the morning roſe the next day, and it ſmote the gourd, that it withered.*

8. *And it came to paſſe when the Sun did ariſe, that God prepared a vehement Eaſt-wind, and the Sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted,*

*and*

*and wished in himselfe to dye, and said, It is better for me to dye, then to live.*

Here the Lord doth first give *Jonah* matter of delight in a plant miraculously rayſed up to cover his booth, and keep him from the heat which increaſed his griefe; then againe, his paſſion is ſtirred up by occaſion of the Lords ſudden removing of the gourd, and rayſing ſuch a wind, as might effectually make the Sunne-beames beat upon him; by all which the Lord layes a ground of more ſenſible reproving of him for his former biterneſſe. *Doct.* 1. A ſpirit once broken and imbittered with troubles, is eaſily grieved and ſtirred up; for, to *Jonah* heat is a griefe from which he muſt be delivered, and which hee cannot well beare. 2. The Lord in healing the infirmities of his people, uſes firſt to lance their ſores, and diſcover more of their putrefaction, before he apply any healing plaiſters; therefore is *Jonah*'s paſſion more kindled, ere the former diſtemper be healed. 3. God in his holy providence may enſnare men who are willfully given to paſſions, with more occaſion to make them vent more of their corruptions; for, ſo doth hee deale with *Jonah*, he gave him delight in a gourd, and then tooke it from him, and ſent the beating Sunne, to caſt (as it were) oyle in the flame of his paſſion; ſo dangerous is it to walk contrary unto God, or to be violently carryed on with any corruption. 4. From this ſending of the gourd and the worme, and the effects of it in *Jonah*, we may ſee; Firſt, the vanity of all earthly delights, in that they all carry a worme of inſtability in their root, which in ſhort time will turne upſide-downe all the expectations which men have from them; for there is here the one day a flouriſhing gourd, and *the next day it is withered.* Secondly, much delight in earthly contentments is ordinarily a fore-runner of much ſorrow in their removal; for, *Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd*, but when it is withered, *he fainted.* Thirdly, paſſion given way unto, will ſoone turne men furious and abſurd; for *Jonah* upon the leaſt diſcontent would be gone: *He wiſhed in himſelfe to dye, and ſaid, It is better for me to dye then to live*, when the Sun beat upon him, and the gourd was gone; as if he ſhould be exempted from bearing any thing; ſo little are men themſelves in their paſſions.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 9. *And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? and he said, I doe well to bee angry, even unto death.*

Before the Lord make use of all this to his holy purpose, hee challengeth *Jonah* concerning this his discontent, that so hee confessing his passion, way may bee made for the reproofe: *Whence learne,* 1. In every action it is our duty to look on our selves as accountable to God for it, and to examine how it is done, whether well or not? for, so doth Gods challenge, to give an account, and to examine, teach: *Dost thou wel, &c?* 2. To be excessively discontent at Providences, especially for small matters, is a thing no way beseeming the servants of God; for this also is imported in the challenge, that it was not right in him, a Prophet, to be *angry,* (yea, *exceedingly angry,* as the words may be read) *for the gourd.* 3. The pride of mans heart is such, that it will justifie it selfe, and stand it out even against the verdict of God, if hee be given over to tentation; for, so doth *Jonah*'s Answer to the Lords question teach: *I doe wel,* saith he, *to be angry,* or, *I am greatly angry, even unto death.* Nothing will please him but death, to bee by it rid of those troubles.

Ver. 10. *Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night.*

11. *And should not I spare Nineveh that great city, wherein are more then fixscore thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand, and their left hand, and also much cattel?*

The Lord doth now apply all that is past to his present purpose; and from this discontent of *Jonah*, lets him see the absurdity of his former murmurings; for, if hee had given way to himselfe so passionately to commiserate so smal a thing as a gourd, in producing whereof hee had no hand, which was of so short continuance, and which needed no pity, and that onely because he received some profit and refreshment by it, why did he

he ſo much ſtumble that the Lord ſpared *Nineveh*, which was his handy work, and every way conſiderable; there being ſo many in it that eminently called for pity, being neither ſenſible of any thing, nor yet by groſſe actual tranſgreſſions had provoked the Lord to denounce that judgement? So that here the Lord is not approving *Ionah*'s paſſion, but by a reaſon drawn from the leſs to the more (wherein *Ionah* a creature, and the great Lord, a ſtick, and great *Nineveh* are compared,) *Ionah* is convinced of ſelfiſhneſſe in approving himſelf in doing that unjuſtly, which he condemned in God, when done moſt mercifully and rightly. *Doct.* 1. Self-love will eaſily blinde men ſo far as to make them approve themſelves in doing of worſe things then thoſe they condemn in others; for this is the ſcope of this reproof, to ſhew *Ionah*, that he would not allow the Lord on juſt cauſes to be merciful; and yet could allow himſelf in his ſelfiſh paſſion. 2. Much more latitude ought to be allowed to God in his way of working without our quarrelling, then we may take to our ſelves; for, ſaith the Lord, *Thou*, who mayeſt be blinded with fancie and humour, *hadſt pity*, and allowedſt thy ſelf in it, *and ſhould not* I, a wiſe and ſovereign Lord, *ſpare Nineveh* being he to whom abſolute ſubmiſſion of ſpirit is due, though I thus reaſon thee out of thy folly? 3. The Lord can eaſily take off the veile of fair pretexts from ſelfiſh men, and let them be ſeen in their owne colours; for, whatever *Ionah* might pretend as the cauſe of his grief for *Nineveh*'s ſparing: the Lord by this demonſtrates, that his bitterneſs flowed indeed from love to himſelf, as might be ſeen in the matter of the Gourd. 4. Men under tentation and in an ill way, are not without much difficulty convinced that they are wrong; therefore the Lord uſeth all theſe meanes that *Ionah* may take with the reproof, when by lively demonſtrations and deeds he ſhould ſee his errour, *Thou hadſt pity upon the Gourd &c. And ſhould not I ſpare* Nineveh? 5. The Lord is ſo conſtant in his good-will, that he will not only ſhew mercy, but wil maintain his ſo doing, againſt all who will oppoſe it; for here he pleads for his mercy to *Nineveh* againſt *Ionah*, *Should not* I *ſpare* Nineveh? 6. The Lord by his practice teacheth us, to let out our affections upon objects according as they are of worth in themſelves; therefore albeit nothing can be of worth to him, yet he reprehends *Ionahs pity on the gourd*: a thing of ſo ſmal worth, coming up in one night, and periſhing in another, as far worſe imployed, then his mercy in *ſparing* Nineveh *that great City*, and

there-

therefore the more to be tendered by him. 7. The Lords creating of men, may give ground of hope to the ſenſible ſinner, that God delights not in his deſtruction, but upon repentance will be willing to ſpare; for, while he reaſons from *Jonahs* pity on the gourd, *for which he had not laboured, neither made it grow*, he teacheth that he could not but ſpare repenting *Nineveh*, it being his own handy-work. 8. Not only perſons come to maturity, and turning to God, but even their children, yea, and cattel, who cannot ſenſibly acknowledg him, do concur to plead for pity to the penitent at Gods hands: and his mercy will look on their condition and number as a reaſon of ſparing; for, he knoweth what Infants are in *Nineveh*, how innocent they were of groſſe provocations, and that there was much cattel there, and from that pleads, that ſo great a City, wherein there are ſo many Infants, and ſo much cattel ſhould be ſpared. 9. The children of the Lord will at laſt be cleared and ſatisfied with all the Lords diſpenſations, and will ſubmit to Gods way in them, as only right and wiſe, however they repine under their fits of tentation; for, the Lord gets the laſt word in this debate, and therefore it is evident from *Jonah*'s ſilence, and not anſwering again, that he ſubmitted at laſt; in teſtimony whereof, and of his unfeigned repentance for his miſcarriage, he glorifieth God, in regiſtring all theſe paſſages for the edification of the Church: whereby alſo is held forth the infallible certainty of holy Scripture, in that the Penmen thereof were ſo little their own in writing of it, as they ſpare not at Gods command, to regiſter their own infirmities, that he may be glorified.

MICAH

# MICAH.

## The ARGUMENT.

THis Prophet living almost in the same time with Isaiah (only he was sent out a little after him, and his commission is also extended to the Kingdome of Israel) is much like him in matter, and is recorded in after-times to have been a faithful man in declining times, as it is, Jer. 26.18. If we compare the beginning of the first and the sixth Chapters, which are almost one and the same, we may take up the whole Prophecie in two solemn Sermons: in the first whereof he foretels the captivity of the ten Tribes, and calamity of Judah by the Assyrians, because of Idolatry, Chap.1. and because of covetousnesse, oppression and contempt of the Messengers of God, Chap.2. and the wickednesse of Rulers both in Church and State, for which Judah is yet further threatned, Chap.3. Then he armes the godly against the Babylonish captivity then approaching, with the promise of restitution under the Messiah, (some taste whereof is mixt with the threatnings, Chap. 2. 12,13.) chap.4. whose birth and government is held forth, chap.7 In the second Sermon, having in the Lords Name challenged and threatned Israel for ingratitude, hypocrisie, injustice, and Idolatry, Chap.6. and having lamented the general defection of the time, he comforts himself and all Believers, under their troubles of al sorts, by many ample promises; concluding al with one solemne acknowledgment of the mercy and fidelity of God, chap.7 Many particulars in this Prophecie wil be best understood by considering the times wherein the Prophet lived, of which see 2 King. 15,16,17. and 18 Chapters. and 2 Chron. 26,27,28,29,30,31. Chapters.

CHAP.

# CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter, after the Title, *v.* 1. The Prophet ſets forth the Lord as in a ſolemn Court-day, appearing with great power, ſeverity and Majeſty to take order with *Iſrael* and *Iudah* for their ſinnes, eſpecially Idolatry, *verſe* 2, 3, 4, 5. Then he particularly foretels the deſolation of the kingdome of *Iſrael*, *ver.* 6, 7. the greatneſſe whereof, together with *Iudah*'s ſtroak by the ſame *Aſſyrian*, is particularly and pathetically held forth by the Prophet, from his own ſorrow for it, *ver.* 8, 9. from enemies rejoicing at it, *ver.* 10.— from declaration of the calamity of particular places where the enemy ſhould come, *ver.*— 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. and from the mournful face that then ſhould be of all things, *v.* 16.

Verſ. 1. *THe word of the* LORD *that came to Micah the Moraſhite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah Kings of Judah, which he ſaw concerning Samaria and Jeruſalem.*

THe Inſcription or Title of the Prophecy doth contain a deſcription of the meſſenger imployed, from his name and the City where he was born, (conceived to be that City *Marſhah* in the Tribe of *Iudah*, *Ioſh.* 15.44. 2 *Chron.* 11.8. and 14.9, 10. which is here threatned, *v.* 15.) as likewiſe his commiſſion from God; the time of his propheſying under ſeveral kings of *Iudah*; and a declaration that his commiſſion extended to both the kingdomes of *Iſrael* and *Iudah*, and eſpecially to the chiefe Cities thereof. *Whence learn*, 1. Men are not to run unſent on publick imployments in Gods houſe, but to waite upon a call and commiſſion; and, having received it, to cleave cloſely to it; for, *the Word of the Lord came to* Micah, and he publiſhed only, *the Word of the Lord that came to him*, and *which he ſaw*, &c. 2. The meſſages and challenges ſent by the Lords ſervants unto the Church, are to be looked on as ſent from him, whoſe challenge the conſcience cannot flee, as being more then our party,

party, and as being moſt certain and infallible: Therefore this doctrine is held out to be *the Word of the Lord*, and *Micah ſaw* this; to wit, in viſion, or by prophetick revelation, implying that what he ſaid, was as certain as if it were ſeen accompliſhed. 3. The Lord in his great mercy and long ſuffering, is pleaſed not to with-hold a teſtimony from his backſliding people, but by multiplication, and long continuance of Prophets, is pleaſed to forewarne them of ruine, if ſo be they may turne and prevent it. Therefore is not only backſliding *Iſrael* honoured with Prophets, but there are many at once in both Kingdomes, and theſe propheſying long in the time of many Kings; for, not onely is *Iſaiah* at the ſame time with *Micah* propheſying in *Judah*; but *Hoſea*, if not alſo *Amos* in *Iſrael*; as may be gathered from the inſcription of their Prophecies. Frequent ſending of Prophets and meſſengers is either a means of ſtirring up to reformation, as when *Haggai* and *Zechariah* were ſent out almoſt at one time, *Hag.*1.1. *Zech.*1.1. with *Ezra* 5.2. or a preſage of ſpeedily approaching ruine where their meſſage is not received, 2 *Chron.*36.15,16,17. 4. The ſervants of God muſt not reſolve to have alwayes ſweet times and fair weather in the ſervice of their generation; but ought to look for variety of times and conditions to wreſtle with; ſuch was the lot of this Prophet, he lived *in the dayes of Jotham, Ahaz, &c.* Having to do not only with wicked Kings in *Iſrael*, who lived in the ſame time with theſe Kings in *Judah*; and in *Judah* he had not onely a pious *Hezekiah* to deal with, but a wicked *Ahaz*, and a *Jotham*, in whoſe dayes reformation was not ſo through, as under *Hezekiah* or *Joſiah*; and he did ſee the total ruine of *Iſrael*, and the affliction of *Judah* by the *Aſſyrians*. 5. As the Lord will not ſpare his own people when they provoke him; ſo doth he in equity deal with them according to the degrees of their provocations: therefore is there a ſad meſſage *concerning Jeruſalem* and they muſt not take it ill to be joyned with *Samaria* in the proceſs, whom yet they hated as vile Apoſtates; yet it is ſo ordered, as *Samaria* is placed firſt, it being firſt and chief in the provocation, (which is a poor preferment) and conſequently, firſt and deepeſt ſharers in the puniſhment, as getting only threatnings; whereas *Judah* is comforted, and puniſhed at this time with greater lenity.

Ver. 2. *Hear all ye people, hearken, O earth, and all that therein is, and let the Lord GOD be witneſs againſt you, the Lord from his holy Temple.*

To

To conciliate Authority to the enſuing Doctrine, the Prophet ſummons all the creatures, and all people to be witneſſes to this proceſſe, againſt *Iſrael* and *Iudah*, and to one ſolemne Court day; wherein the Lord would judg and witneſs againſt his people, and by his judgements ſhould vindicate the ſentence of his ſervants againſt ſin, from all contempt of unbelievers. *Doct.* 1. The Word of the Lord ought to be gravely, and with all Authority delivered by his Meſſengers; therefore doth *Micah* by this ſolemn charge to all creatures to appear, declare that his meſſage was a grave purpoſe, not to be ſlighted, and that it was the Lord who hath command of all creatures, and not men only they had to do with. 2. It is uſual for the viſible Church, not only to ſlip through inadvertency, but eſpecially to drown her ſelf in Apoſtaſie; and having once fallen away, to prove ſo void of all ſenſe of Piety, ſo ſelfiſh and ſo obſtinate, as not to be eaſily convinced; and ſo ſtupid in ſin, as not to be ſenſible of approaching wrath: therefore muſt there be a ſolemn citation of all Nations, as if there were need of a dayes-man to awake them from their ſleep, and *the Lord muſt be a witneſs againſt them*, ere they be convinced. 3. God is a witneſſe, whoſe teſtimony may and will convince of ſin, as not only knowing all things perfectly, but when he declares this with power, either inwardly to a conſcience only, or outwardly by corrections alſo, he will convince the moſt obſtinate; *Let the Lord be witneſſe againſt you*, and he will carry his point. 4. When ſin is come to an height in the Church, and they will not take with, or ſtrive to amend it, then the Lord will publickly, in view of all the world, convince and correct them by his ſtroaks; therefore doth he call *all people, the earth, and all that therein is*, to hear and ſee the Lord witneſſing againſt his Church: which is a bitter caſe when our betrothed Lord is provoked to go out of doors to the ſtreets with his beloveds faults. 5. The juſtice and equity of the Lords dealing with his people, even when he proceeds to ſeverity in correction, is ſo uncontrovertedly clear, as that it may be ſeen and read of all, therefore alſo are the creatures called to appear, as witneſſes of his proceedings, and that affliction is juſtly procured by *Iſrael*. 6. If this paſſage, *from his holy Temple*, be underſtood of heaven; it teacheth, that however men may obſtinately bear out againſt all convictions from men, yet the glorious Majeſty of God, when he lets forth any rayes of it from heaven, (as v. 3, 4.) in his works, it will ſo dazle them, as they ſhall not be able

to ſtand out: If we underſtand it of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, it teacheth, that the Jewes their confiding much in the Temple, ſhould not exempt them, but rather be a part of their ditty; that the mercies of God, manifeſted there, and from thence unto them, ſhould effectually convince them of ſin, and aggravate it, who have not walked anſwerably; and that *Iſraels* renouncing of that Temple and the worſhip of God, there ſhall be matter of a ſad challenge, which they will not be able to anſwer. In all theſe reſpects *the Lord God will be witneſſe from his holy Temple.*

Verſ. 3. *For, behold, the* LORD *cometh forth out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.*

4. *And the mountains ſhall be molten under him, and the valleyes ſhall be cleft: as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a ſteep place.*

To ſtir them up the more, and to make them heed the meſſage, he declares in general Gods purpoſe concerning them; that he would manifeſt himſelf in his glory from heaven, and trample under his feet whatever is moſt eminent, and make high and low feel the effects of his Preſence and Juſtice, according to his infinite power, which when he pleaſeth to let forth, will make mountains to tremble and reſolve into duſt; and vallyes to cleave, as wax melteth before a fire, and as waters run with violence down a ſteep place. *Doct.* 1. However the Lord do moſt clearly manifeſt his glory in heaven, and Atheiſts and carnal men think he is ſhut up there; yet as he is every where filling heaven and earth; ſo will he, when he pleaſes, manifeſt his preſence on earth, in glorious effects of providence; for ſo doth this ſpeech import, *The Lord cometh forth out of his place*; that however heaven be in a peculiar way his habitation, yet he will from thence appear in glorious majeſty on earth. 2. The glorious manifeſtations of God in the world, ought to be looked upon with reverence, admiration, and humble wondring. So much doth *behold* prefixed to this manifeſtation, import. 3. It is quite beſide the expectation of a back-ſliding Church, that God ſhould appear in ſeverity againſt them; and therefore

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ſuch a diſpenſation ſurprizeth them: ſo much alſo doth this *Behold* teach, that to them who ſtill dream of peace with God, notwithſtanding their wicked way, it ſhould be an unexpected and ſudden thing to ſee him appear in glory to puniſh. 4. The greatneſſe and majeſty of God, ought to be well ſtudied and conſidered upon, by all thoſe who oppoſe him, and reject his will; not to drive them yet further from him, but rather to cruſh their obſtinacy, and induce them to repent; for, Gods Majeſty is here held forth to make them tremble, to be found in a way diſapproved of his Word. 5. Men in their declinings from God, ſeek unto themſelves falſe refuges, whereby they think to ſhelter themſelves againſt Gods vengeance, but are herein deluded; for, *there are high places of the earth*; whereby are ſignified their Idols worſhipped on theſe high places, wherein they truſted, or their ſtrong holds, or high and lofty men, who thought to be exempted from common judgements; or, generally their high and lofty imaginations, all which, or whatſoever elſe they can oppoſe, the Lord is potent to cruſh; *He will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.* 6. Greatneſs of oppoſition againſt God, contributes to ſet him out more eminently by cruſhing thereof; for, *He treads on the high places*, that is, not only cruſhes and commands them, but is the more eminently ſeen in ſo doing, in that they are high; their height making them conſpicuous from afar, while he ſtands upon them. 7. The Lord is able to overturne what is greateſt and moſt ſtable in the world, and make all creatures feel his power and indignation in an effectual way; this is held forth in that the *mountains ſhall be molten under him, and the valleys cleft as wax before the fire, &c.* 8. Sin in the people of God, makes that which otherwiſe might be comfortable, matter of terrour to them; for, whereas the Majeſty and Power of God is comfortable to the Church, in that ſhe hath ſuch a God to cruſh her enemies, and wherein they deal proudly to be above them; yet now, becauſe of ſin, it is the matter of her terror: However it be ſo far comfortable, as that all this is done to drive her to his mercy.

Ver. 5. *For the tranſgreſſion of Jacob is all this, and for the ſins of the houſe of Iſrael: what is the tranſgreſſion of Jacob? Is not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jeruſalem?*

Followeth the Lords quarrel, or the cauſe procuring his appearing thus in glorious ſeverity, which is the hainous tranſgreſſion of his people, who came of *Jacob*, otherwiſe called *Iſrael*, and withal, he declares, that the Original and riſe of this tranſgreſſion in *Iſrael*, was from the chief City *Samaria*, while as *Omri* and *Ahab* did there erect Idolatry (having tranſlated the regal dwelling thither, which was before in *Tirzah*, 1 *Kings* 16.23,24.) which had now in proceſſe of time, ſpread through the Kingdom, and had daily influence from the Court and chief City: and that in *Iudah* the City of *Ieruſalem* had caſt a Copy to all the Land, and not only in ſins againſt the Second Table, but in corrupting the worſhip of God with their high places, which *Iotham* tolerated, and his ſon *Ahaz* proceeded to groſſer abominations, 2 *Kin.*16.10,11. 2 *Chr.*28.24.25. and ſo drew on the people to imitate their wayes. *Doc.*1. The provocations of the Lords priviledged people may bring on very remarkable ſtroaks; for, *all this* (that is, all this appearing in ſeverity,) *is for the tranſgreſſion of Iacob.* 2 Albeit the Lord in his great mercy look over the infirmities of his people; yet rebellion, and idolatry, and corrupting of his worſhip, eſpecially when multiplyed, is that which he will not tolerate: for, this ſtroak is for their *tranſgreſſions* (or, *rebellions*) *their ſins and high places.* 3. In times of defection and controverſie, the Lord hath a ſpecial eye upon, and a chief quarrel againſt ſuch as have a leading hand in bringing on, or carrying on the Apoſtaſie; for, theſe queſtions, *What is the tranſgreſſion of Iacob? What are the high places of Iudah?* imports, that God obſerves, and would have the cauſe of all the defection, and who began it, ſought out. 4. In univerſal defections, eminent places and perſons are ordinarily moſt culpable, as miſleading others by their example and authority; for, *the tranſgreſſion of* Jacob *is* Samaria, *the high places of* Judah *are* Jeruſalem; that is, iniquity abounds moſt in theſe Cities, and the ſins of the Land have their riſe and countenance from thence. 5. The Lord hath an eſpecial eye upon his own Church and people, to whom he manifeſts himſelf and marks their declinings narrowly, eſpecially in the matter of his worſhip: for, *Judahs high places* are eſpecially pointed at, whereas all *Iſraels* deſperate defection is named in a general of *tranſgreſſion.*

Ver.6. *Therefore I will make Samaria* as *an heap of the field*, and as *plantings of a vineyard: and I wil*

*poure*

*poure down the ſtones thereof into the valley, and I will diſcover the foundations thereof.*

The Lord pronounceth a more particular ſentence againſt *Iſrael* for their ſins, and particularly againſt *Samaria*, that when the ten Tribes ſhould be led captive, that City (as being chief in the ſin) ſhould have a remarkable ſtroak; the buildings thereof ſhould be raſed to the very foundation, the ſtones thereof caſt down from the hill whereon it ſtood, to the valley, to lye as heaps of ſtones do, which are gathered by Labourers of the ground; and the place thereof ſhould be only for planting of vineyards in it. *Doct.* 1. Iniquity entertained, will lay moſt eminent and ſtrong places deſolate; for, *Therefore wil I make Samaria as an heap of the field, &c* although it endured a ſiege for three years, 2 *Kings* 17.5. yet this threatning takes effect at laſt. 2. Eminency in ſin, cauſeth eminency in judgements; therefore *Samaria is made an heap, the ſtones poured down, &c.* whereas other Cities of that Kingdom were not ſo ruined, but there are *ſome Cities of Samaria*, or, of the Countrey about to bee inhabited, 2 *Kings* 17.24. when it lyeth deſolate. 3. Wicked men, proſecuting their wicked and ambitious ends, may be made uſe of by God in an holy manner, as inſtruments to execute his judgments upon his backſliding people, and are ſo to be looked on by all, who would have the uſe of their condition; therefore, the Lord, for his peoples inſtruction and direction, doth own the ſtroak to be inflicted by the Aſſyrians, *I wil make Samaria as an heap of the field, &c.*

Ver. 7. *And all the graven images thereof ſhall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof ſhall be burnt with the fire, and all the Idols therof will I lay deſolate; for ſhe gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they ſhall return to the hire of an harlot.*

*Samaria* is threatned with further ruine, in that not only her private things, but her ſuppoſed ſacred things ſhould be deſtroyed, her graven images broken, that the mettal thereof might be carried away; and her gifts given to Idols, (as harlots do to their Paramours) or her riches, out of which ſhe gave theſe gifts, and which ſhe accounted to be the reward of her idolatry,

ſhall either be burnt by the furious ſoldiers, or go as they came, and periſh as they are purchaſed, and ſo her idols ſhould be deſolate. *Doct.* 1. As it proves the vanity of idol-gods, that they are obnoxious to deſtruction and deſolation, ſo in dayes of vengeance Gods ſpeciall quarrel is againſt them, to ſhew their frailty, and the folly of all thoſe who cleave unto them: therefore *all the graven images thereof ſhall be beaten in pieces, and all the idols thereof wil I lay deſolate*, by with-drawing reſpect, worſhip, and gifts from them. 2. Idolatry is in Gods account ſpiritual harlotry and adultery; for their gifts given to idols, are *hires*, ſuch as are given unto, or by harlots, as the word ſignifieth, and their riches *the hire of an harlot*. Idolaters break that Covenant betwixt God as their Husband, and them as his Spouſe, and doe poure out that affection due onely to God, on idols, and therefore provoke him, in his jealouſie to puniſh. 3. As men may, through Gods permiſſion, proſper in an ill way: ſo are they ready to ſacrifice their proſperity to a wrong cauſe, and by their proſpering to harden themſelves in their way: for *Samaria*'s gifts beſtowed on her idols, or her great riches enabling her to offer, *ſhe gathered it of the hire of an harlot*: that is, ſhee acknowledged not God for her riches, but conceived that they came to her for her unlawfull leagues and treaties with idolaters, and as a reward of her idolatry, and defection from the Tribe of *Judah*, and the worſhip of God; and therefore perſevered in it. See *Hoſ.* 2. 5. *Ier.* 44. 17, 18. 4. Riches purchaſed in a wrong way, or abuſed to confirme men in a ſinfull courſe, ſhall come to nought; for, *the hire thereof ſhal be burnt with fire, and they ſhal return to the hires of an harlot*. Whereby wee are not ſo much to underſtand, that the *Aſſyrian* Idolaters ſhould take the riches and gifts of *Samaria*, and abuſe them, as *Iſrael* had done, in putting theſe gifts in the Temple of their Idols, and acknowledging the riches as given them by their god: as that it is a proverbial ſpeech, ſignifying, that as theſe riches were ill-purchaſed by *Iſrael*, ſo they ſhould go as they came, and do them no good, but vaniſh; for an harlot purchaſeth her hire ill, and ordinarily it is as ill ſpent.

Ver. 8. *Therefore I will wail and howle, I will go ſtript and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.*

The ſentence being pronounced, the Prophet proceeds to ſet forth

forth the greatneſſe of the judgment, together with that which was to come on *Judah*, that they may be ſtirred up to lay it more ſeriouſly to heart in time. And firſt, hee declares what their calamity ſhall be, by his own ſorrow for it, which was extreamly bitter, as of dragons and owles, whoſe horrible howlings in deſert places, is made uſe of in Scripture, to expreſſe the condition of men ſenſible of great calamities, *Iob* 30. 29. *Pſa.* 102. 6. and by his going naked, and ſtript of his upper garments, as a ſigne of totall deſolation, *Iſa.* 20. 2, 3. By all which the Lord doth not declare his allowance of any bitter carnal mourning in trouble; but by the Prophets practice the Lord would teach, 1. When his people provoke him, he can ſend affliction beyond expreſſion, and ſuch ſorrows as no outward ſignes can ſufficiently vent; for, this *howling, wailing, and going naked*, doth import ſo much in the Prophet foreſeeing the ſtorme, and doth foretell, that it ſhall be ſo with the people, when they feele it. 2. It is the duty of faithfull Miniſters, not onely to denounce judgement againſt ſinne and ſinners, but ſo to doe it as may make them moſt ſenſible of their danger before they feele it in reality; therefore doth *Micah waile, and howle, &c.* that they might thereby read the reality and weight of the threatning, and ſtudy to prevent the execution. 3. A moſt effectuall way of making people ſenſible of threatnings, is, when the meſſengers themſelves are affected with them when they deliver them; for, therefore doth *Micah*, who carried this meſſage, *waile and howle.* 4. Threatnings from the Lord ought to be denounced with great affection and ſympathie in the Meſſengers, that ſo they may evidence, that it is no revengefull and bitter ſpirit in them, that maketh them ſpeak ſo ſharp; and withall, that their affection thus evidenced, may make way for an unpleaſant meſſage: *Therefore will I waile and howle, &c.* (ſaith he) as a ſympathizer with the people of God, however, as his meſſenger, I carry the hard tidings.

Ver. 9. *For her wound* is *incurable; for it is come unto Judah, he is come unto the gate of my people*, even *to Jeruſalem.*

In giving a reaſon of his ſorrow, he yet further deſcribes the calamity from the univerſality of it, that *Samaria*, as ſhee is deſperately ſick of provocations, without any hope that ever ſhee

ſhould amend; ſo her ſtroak was incurable; and that the Aſſyrian having deſtroyed them, that fire ſhould burn through all Judah, even to Jeruſalem, the mother-City, and ſeat of juſtice to all the Jewes, of whom he was one, and whom hee loved dearly: And ſo hee comes to the ſecond branch of the Threatning which is againſt Judah and Jeruſalem; as was likewiſe foretold by *Iſaiah*, chap. 8. 7, 8. and accompliſhed, 2 *Kings* 18. 13. &c. *Doct.* 1. It is a bitter cauſe of complaint, when ſtroaks inflicted by God are irremediable, whereas a ſtroak is eaſie wherein there is hope of deliverance; therefore doth *Micah* waile, *for her wound is incurable.* 2. Albeit the Lord begin his puniſhments for ſin where it pleaſed him; yet when hee lifts up his hand, ſuch as are guilty of the ſame ſinnes, may think not to eſcape; for when the wound is begun at Samaria, *it comes unto* Judah, *he is come to the gate of my people, &c.* Jeruſalem being ſo called, becauſe it was the ſeate of juſtice, which uſed to be adminiſtred publickly in the gate. 3. The Lord may ſuſpend his corrections upon his Church for her backſliding, untill a time of reformation, and then inflict them; for, however *Ahaz* had his own fears from *Rezin* King of Syria, *Iſa* 7. 2 *Kings* 16. yet the correction for the high places of Judah (of which ver. 5.) is by the Aſſyrian, who deſtroyed Samaria, and that in the dayes of *Hezekiah* the Reformer, 2 *Kings* 18. *It is come* (to wit from *Samaria*) *into Judah.* The reaſon of which, is partly, becauſe Reformation being not ſet about ſincerely and cordially, (as it was in the body of Judah in *Joſiah's* time, *Jer.* 3. 6, 10.) doth ſo much the more provoke the Lord to puniſh for former Apoſtaſie; partly, the Lord chuſeth a time of Reformation to puniſh in, that a people, being at ſuch a time ſenſible of the ſinne procuring the ſtroak, the affliction may be bleſſed to make them reform the more throughly; and partly, the Lord chuſeth this time, that the ſtroak may be the more moderate, there being ſome ſtanding in the gap, and no totall backſliding; and accordingly we finde Jeruſalem preſerved, though threatned. 4. The affections of the Lords ſervants in a time of diſtreſſe, ought to be ſet on work to ſympathize chiefly with ſuch as are moſt dear to God; therefore ſaith *Micah*, *He is come to the gate of my people* Not ſo much his, becauſe hee was their countrey-man, (which ought not to ſway with Miniſters in publick adminiſtrations, *Deut.* 33. 8, 9. though otherwiſe to be tender even in that reſpect, is commendable) as becauſe they were more upright in Religion then Samaria, and

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therefore the enemies coming even to Jeruſalem where the Temple ſtood, is moſt bitter.

Ver. 10. *Declare yee it not at Gath, weepe yee not at all: in the houſe of Aphrah roll thy ſelf in the duſt.*

In the next place, the calamity of the people, and cauſe of the Prophets ſorrow, is held forth to be ſo great, that it were to be wiſhed, that their enemies (ſuch as the Philiſtims in Gath) never knew of it, and ſo might not inſult over them in their miſery, to add to their affliction; and therefore in a figurative way (uſuall in Lamentations, and borrowed from 2 *Sam.* 1.20.) they are injoyned to conceal their affliction from ſuch, by ſuppreſſing their weeping, leſt they ſhould hear it: *Whence learn,* 1. There are ſtill ſome in the world waiting for matter of joy in the Churches calamities, whoſe gladdeſt day will be to ſee her in trouble; For, ſo much doth this prohibition *to declare it in Gath,* import. 2. Of all enemies, ſuch are among the moſt inveterate, as being neereſt unto the people of God, yet partake not of their mercies, for, ſuch were theſe at Gath, lying hard upon the borders of Judah, from whom eſpecially they would conceale their grief. 3. It is a new grief, and great addition to the afflictions of the godly, that enemies by reaſon of their calamities, take occaſion to reproach them, their God, and Religion. And it would be a deliverance in part, to have their caſe concealed from ſuch, and an eaſe to ſmother their grief, if that could conceal it; for, this charge, *Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not at all,* doth import the Churches wiſh, that ſuch knew it not, and her eaſe if it were ſo. 4. The Church of God muſt reſolve not onely to have afflictions, but alſo to have them noted and obſerved by enemies, and to lie under all their inſolencies and reproaches becauſe of them, till their triall be perfected; for, while in a figurative way the Prophet thus prohibits, it intimates that it could not be hid, and that the Church had this added to her triall.

In the reſt of this Chapter to the laſt verſe, the greatneſſe of this ſtroak, and the cauſe of the Prophets ſorrow, is yet further ſet forth, in a particular and pathetick enumeration of ſuch places (eſpecially as would appear in Judah) as ſhould feele the calamity of Warr, and what their calamity ſhould be; and albeit

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we find no mention elſewhere of divers places named here, eſpecially theſe, *ver.*11,12. yet we are to conceive, that they are either proper names of places (though unknowne to us) choſen out from among other places, in regard the ſignification of their names, doth illuſtrate their condition by the War: or, that they are appellative and borrowed names given to ſome places from their qualities, properties or condition, to illuſtrate, their calamity in the enſuing tempeſt, as may be ſeen in the particulars. And ſo here by *Aphr h* ſignifying *duſt*, we are to underſtand either that City in *Benjamin*, Joſh.18.23. where the *Aſſyrian* was to come (and which was far from the Philiſtines hearing,) or, generally, a place brought to the duſt, and made duſty by affliction, who therefore are to roll themſelves in the duſt, in token of great ſorrow for their duſty and afflicted condition; ſee *Ier.6.26. Doct.*1. As the children of God by their behaviour in trouble, are to give no occaſion of reproaching unto enemies; ſo are they before the Lord to evidence, that they are ſenſible of his hand; for, as they are *not to weep at all in Gath*, or where the Philiſtines may hear it, ſo are they notwithſtanding *in the houſe of Aphrah* amongſt themſelves, to expreſſe their ſorrow. 2. As great afflictions will be very grievous and bitter, making men without any regard to themſelves, wallow in duſt and aſhes; ſo the ſweet uſe of trouble is, when men ſtoop to their condition, and to what it calls unto, while *Aphrah* made duſty by affliction deſcends to the duſt; *in the houſe of* Aphrah *roll, &c.* 3. Our kindly bed in trouble, is duſt, as being duſt by our Original, and the end of affliction being to let us know we are ſuch, *In the houſe of Aphrah* (or, *of duſt*) *roll thy ſelf in the duſt.*

Ver.11. *Paſs ye away thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy ſhame naked; the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel; he ſhal receive of you his ſtanding.*

The next place mentioned is *Saphir*, the ſignification whereof leads to this Interpretation; That ſuch as dwelt beautifully and pleaſantly (for ſo much doth the *inhabitant of* Saphir ſignifie) ſhould either flee, or be carried into captivity by the enemy, in much ignominy and reproach; as this manner of ſpeech is uſed to expreſſe great ignominy put upon captives by licenti-

licentious ſouldiers, *Iſai.* 20. 4. & 47. 3. *Ier.* 13. 22. It teacheth, that as pleaſures and delectable ſituation and dwelling will be no guard againſt God purſuing a controverſie for ſinne; ſo pleaſure abuſed will be forth-coming for double ignominy, and will contribute to imbitter a cup of affliction; for, *the inhabitant of* Saphir *paſſeth away, having her ſhame naked*: her glory keeps her not from ignominy, and it is ſo much the ſadder as that ſhe had been a *Saphir*. The next place, *Zaanan* ſignifying a *place of concourſe like flocks*; and *Beth-ezel* ſignifying a place that is neer, lead us to this expoſition of the reſt of the verſe; That a place of great concourſe and many people, ſhall not come out to help or comfort, when their neereſt neighbours are mourning: the reaſon whereof is ſubjoyned in theſe words, *He ſhall receive of you his ſtanding*; that is, *Zaanan* ſhall not appear in *Beth-ezels* trouble, as having their own difficulties, and learning by the example of their neighbours, that there is no ſtanding out or reſiſting of the enemy; or they dare not expreſs compaſſion, as looking that the enemy will ſettle his camp among them, and take a ſore recompence if they make him continue in a ſiege againſt them. *Doct.* 1. Humane helps and greateſt probabilities, will prove but vain in a day of vengeance; for, a place of repair ſuch (as *Zaanan*) will not be able to help, no not a place neer unto them; whereas either their number, or the vicinity of the place afflicted, might ſeem to promiſe otherwiſe. 2. It is an uſual thing in a day of calamity to ſee men ſelfiſh and taken up with their own grievances, without regarding others, and to ſee the Lord give every man and place ſo much to do as ſhall give him no leaſure to look about him: *Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel, &c.* See *Ier.* 47. 3. 3. Univerſal diſcouragement ordinarily goes before an inſtrument of Gods vengeance, eſpecially once prevailing to make way for his further ſucceſſe, one place learning by the example of another that there is no reſiſtance; for, ſo much doth the firſt interpretation of that paſſage, *He ſhall receive of you his ſtanding* teach. 4. However it be both lawful and neceſſary for a people to beſtir themſelves for their own defence in danger; yet ſuch is the fierceneſs of Gods anger purſuing for ſin, as all oppoſition made to the inſtruments thereof, doth but tend to the oppoſers greater diſadvantage, while as the enemies loſſe of time, means or men, is made up by their ſpoil and further ruine; for ſo much doth the other interpretation of that paſſage (which agrees alſo with the principal ſcope) import.

Ver.

**Ver. 12.** *For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the* LORD *unto the gates of Jeruſalem.*

This verſe contains another evidence that there ſhall bee no ſtanding againſt that calamity, and therefore comes in, as a farther clearing of that in the end of the former verſe, as appears by the Particle, *for*. The ſignification of *Maroth* (which is *bitterneſs*) and of the Original word rendred, *waited*, which ſignifieth alſo to be grieved, and of the word rendred *But*, which ſignifies chiefly *Becauſe*; leads to this interpretation of the verſe; That thoſe whoſe condition is made bitter by affliction, ſhould earneſtly expect for ſome good; but in vain, they ſhould yet be more grieved for want of it, and for diſappointment of theſe expectations, and that becauſe the trouble ſhould overſpread, and reach to the gates of the royal City where the Temple was. *Whence learn*, 1. When the Lord ariſeth to plead againſt ſinners, he can put them in a very diſconſolate condition, and make all their pleaſures end in bitterneſs: for, in this calamity there is, *The inhabitant of Maroth*, or *of Bitterneſſes*, even many of them; See *Ruth* 1. 20. 2 Howſoever afflicted people do uſually much look out for ſome iſſue, yet grief may be oft-times but growing, when ſuch as have felt ſome bitterneſſe, are expecting an end of it; for, *The inhabitant of Maroth was grieved* (or *ſick with grief*) *for good*, which they wanted, though *they waited carefully* for better, as the word alſo ſignifies. See *Jer.* 14. 19 3. Sometime the only comfort left a people in trouble may be this, that a greater trouble is coming to ſhoulder out, and make them forget a leſſer: *Evil coming unto Jeruſalem*, to make them forget particular grievances; and *from the Lord*, to make them digeſt the Aſſyrians fury. 4. Afflictions ſent from God upon the Church, are to be obſerved and laid to heart, as not only ſad in themſelves, but as Preſages of great anger to come on the reſt of the world beſide; for, they were grieved *for good, becauſe evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jeruſalem*; that added to their grief, and was an evidence of their own hopeleſſe condition.

**Ver. 13.** *O thou inhabitant of Lachiſh, binde the charet to the ſwift beaſt: ſhe is the beginning of the ſin*

*ſin to the daughter of Zion: for the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael were found in thee.*

*Lachiſh*, a City in the Tribe of *Judah*, *Joſh.* 15.21,39. *Jer.* 34.7. is threatned, that they ſhould endeavour ſpeedily to flee from the enemy, but to no purpoſe, as accordingly it was beſieged by *Sennacherib*, 2 *Kings* 18.14,17. and 19.8. the reaſon of which judgment is, that they having firſt of any in *Judah*, received the idolatrous worſhip of the ten Tribes, occaſioned the ſpreading thereof even to *Jeruſalem*. *Doct.* 1. The Lord hath in his wiſdom ſo ordered the writing of holy Scripture, as every particular paſſage and book hath ſomewhat in it for our further information, which would not be ſo clearly had elſewhere, to the end we may be allured to ſtudy it much; as here, we have *Lachiſh* receiving of Idolatry firſt, which is not mentioned in the hiſtory. 2. As ſin will drive men from their habitations; ſo flight will periſh from the ſwift, when God hath judgments to bring on; for, *bind the chariot to the ſwift beaſt*, implies, that they ſhould be made glad to flee from their City on any terms, and that they ſhould not be ſaved by flight. 3. To be the firſt occaſion, and a chief ſtumbling-block in a Lands defection, brings an exemplary judgement; for, *Lachiſh* is ſhut up in her enemies hand, becauſe *ſhe is the beginning of ſin to the daughter of Sion: for the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael were found in thee.*

Ver. 14. *Therefore ſhalt thou give preſents to Moreſheth-Gath, the houſes of Achzib* ſhall be *a lie to the Kings of Iſrael.*

*Lachiſh*'s further judgment is, that when they ſhould ſend Preſents and Gifts to ſome Town or Countrey called *Moreſheth*, belonging to Gath of the Philiſtines, (and ſo is diſtinguiſhed from that *Moreſhah* in *Judah*;) or (as the word ſignifies) *to the inheritance* (and people) of *Gath*, for aid and aſſiſtance againſt the enemy, they ſhould diſappoint them, as the Kings of Iſrael were by ſome other Confederates. This *Achzib*, with ſome other cities was not at firſt ſubdued by the tribe of *Aſher*, *Judg.* 1.31,32. And it ſeemes the Kings of *Iſrael* had covenanted with them for aid againſt the Aſſyrians, but were deceived, as *Lachiſh* was by the Philiſtines. *Achzib* is only named, either becauſe

cauſe the reſt dpended on it, and are called the houſes of *Achzib*; or becauſe the ſignification of its name (which is a lye) doth ſerve to illuſtrate their diſappointing of their friends. *Doct.* 1. Wicked men had rather imploy any means in their ſtrait, then ſeek to God, and ſo do provoke God to diſappoint them; for, *Thou ſhalt ſend preſents to Moreſheth-Gath*, to wit, to no purpoſe. 2. The Lord hath given many experiences of the vanity of all humane helps when he is angry, though men will not be wiſe to make uſe of them; for, the diſappointment of *Lachiſh* is illuſtrated from another, which might have learned them wiſdom: *The houſes of Achzib are a lye, &c.* 3. The vanity of all refuges when God is provoked, is conſpicuous to an obſervant eye, as if it were their very name, and written on their forehead, *The houſes of Achzib* (which ſignifies *a lie*) *are a lie* anſwerable to their name.

**Verſ. 15.** *Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareſhah: he ſhall come unto Adullam the glory of Iſrael.*

He threatens *Mareſhah* in *Iudah*, Joſh. 15.44. which ſeems to have been his own City, that (according to the ſignification of the name) the Lord ſhould bring the enemy to be their heir, and poſſeſſe their goods; and then ſummarily ſets forth the extent of this ſtroak, that it ſhould reach to *Adullam*, which lay Southward of *Jeruſalem*, toward the border of *Judah*, Joſh. 15. 21,35. That which is ſubjoyned, *The glory of Iſrael*, may be underſtood of *Adullam*, that it was a ſtrong City wherein *Iſrael* gloried; or, that in coming to *Adullam*, he ſhould come to *Jeruſalem*, which was the glory of all *Iſrael*, *Adullam* being beyond *Jeruſalem* to the Aſſyrians, who came from the North; or, by way of Exclamation, O the glory of *Iſrael*, being now ſtained by this univerſal overflowing ſcourge, which went from the North to the very South-border of *Iudah*. *Doct.* 1. The Meſſengers of God ought not to let forth the minde of God partially, according as affection or intereſt would direct them: but are to publiſh it freely and fully without reſpect to friend or foe: for the Prophet ſpares not his own City *Mareſhah*. 2. Provocation againſt God makes men purchaſe unſure, and may make their enemies their heirs; for, *I will bring an heir to thee, O inhabitant of Mareſhah*. 3. When God raiſeth up inſtruments to ſcourge a Land for ſin, men are not to expect that lying a-

far

farre off, and out of the way, will exempt them: but that God will finde out those whom hee is to chastise, where-ever they be: for, *He shall come unto Adullam*, which was the remotest border to the Assyrian. 4. Which soever of these wayes above mentioned wee understand this *glory of Israels*, it teacheth, that albeit the visible Church enjoy the great priviledge of Gods presence in his pure Ordinances, which is her glory: and albeit particular places have their own excellencies, whereof they glory and boast, yet when God is provoked, and these priviledgs abused, they will not keep off corrections: *The glory of Israel* will be *come unto*, and laid in the dust.

Ver. 16. *Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children, enlarge thy baldnesse as the eagle, for they are gone into captivity from thee.*

In the last place, the greatnesse of the calamity is summarily comprehended in the mournfull face of all things, and the great sorrow that shall be when it comes to passe; to which the body of the people, or chief and mother-cities are invited; and called (as it were) from their vices, to hearken rather to the bitternesse abiding them, and to consider what ruine they cast themselves upon by sin; their sorrow to come is expressed in such signes as were usuall in those times, such as making themselves bald, even as the Eagle when she casts her feathers, and polling of their hair, of which see, *Ezra* 9. 3. *Job* 1.20. *Isa.* 22. 12. *Ezek.* 27.31. and the cause of their sorrows is foretold, that their pleasant children were to be carried into captivity, as *Ashur* dealt with *Israel*, and (it seems) with some of *Iudah*; and for this, they who are left are to mourn. *Doct.* 1. It is fitting, that men in a sinfull time were thinking on the bitternesse that may ensue, and of the wormwood that God will poure in among their delights, to marre their mirth: therefore doth he call to *make bald and poll*: that is, in their sinfulnesse to be thinking of such times: See *Isa.* 10. 3. 2. Sin will in the end resolve in bitternesse; and as calamity for sin will be grievous on the Church; so sin procuring it, and want of reconciliation with God under it, will make it sad and intolerable: This is signified by these expressions; *Make thy self bald, poll thee, inlarge thy baldnesse as the Eagle.* 3. Captivity from the place of our habitation, and restraint of outward liberty, is a sharp triall, and matter of sorrow, not onely to those who

who are ſo dealt with, but ought to be looked on by others, as matter of ſympathy, and by the body of a people as matter of their affliction, in diminiſhing of their number, and leaving them who are left behind weak and contemptible: for this is the cauſe of baldneſſe and ſorrow to the body of the people: *for thy delicate children, for they are gone into captivity from thee.*

## CHAP. II.

IN the firſt part of this Chapter the Lord proſecutes his controverſie againſt his people for ſeveral ſins: and firſt, he accuſeth them for aſſiduouſneſs in ſin, eſpecially covetouſneſſe and oppreſſion, *ver.*1,2. and threatens them with inſuperable and lamentable difficulties, and caſting them out of their Land, *ver.*3,4,5. 2. He threatens and expoſtulates with them for their oppoſition to his Meſſengers, *ver.*6,7. 3. He again accuſeth them for cruel robbery, not ſparing ſo much as women and children, *ver.* 8,9. and threatens them with exile, *ver.*10. 4. He accuſeth them for their approbation of, and delighting in falſe Prophets, *v.*11. In the ſecond part of the Chapter he comforts believers with promiſes of reſtitution by Chriſt, *ver.*12,13.

Verſ.1. *WO to them that deviſe iniquity, and work evil upon their beds: when the morning is light, they practiſe it, becauſe it is in the power of their hand.*

THe judgment of God is declared to be already upon them, and yet further to be inflicted for their aſſiduouſneſs and activity in plotting and practiſing of evil; hereby learning us how to diſcern a condition plagued of God, and which without repentance will be purſued with more plagues (for this *Wo* implies, both that ſuch a caſe is a plague of it ſelf, and that it will be plagued) of which there are theſe evidences: 1. When evil wayes become habitual to men, ſo as they are never out of them, but by night as well as by day carried away with them; for

for, it is *on their beds*, (when they ſhould reſt or examine themſelves, *Pſ* 4.4. or be inſtructed by their reines, *Pſ.* 16.7. or meditate on God, *Pſ.* 63.6. *&c.* as well as in the morning, when they ſhould direct their prayer unto God, *Pſ.* 5. 2. and goe forth to their lawfull callings, *Pſ.* 104. 22. 23.) that they are thus imployed, their ſin ſleeps not. 2. When men not onely ſin through infirmity, being ſurpriſed and made to ſtumble in a fit of tentation, but their wits are bended to project and plot ſin; for, *Wo to them that deviſe iniquity.* 3. When mens ſpirits are ſo taken up with wickedneſſe, that they delight themſelves with acting it in their owne imaginations: *Wo to them that work evil on their beds*: that is, are ſo tranſported, that their ſpirits and fancy imagine themſelves, as acting thoſe wickedneſſes, which they cannot for preſent get really acted, and thus think to delight themſelves. 4. When mens hearts are ſo farre engaged in their premeditate wickedneſſe, that without taking leiſure betwixt their deliberation and practiſe, to bethink themſelves what they are doing, they run eagerly about the execution of their purpoſes, which is the wofull fruits of giving ſin too much roome in the heart, that being Maſter there, it violently and effectually commands our practiſe: for, *Wo unto them*, who having deviſed iniquity, *when the morning is light, they practiſe it.* See *Jer.* 8.6. *Eph.* 4. 19. 5. When men ill-affected have power to effect their deſires, and that they ſucceed with them, God laying no impediment in their way to ſtop their progreſſe in ſin; for it is *Woe* upon them, that *it is in the power of their hands*, to practiſe the ill they have deviſed. 6. It is alſo an evidence of wo upon, and coming upon men, when having power, and wanting external reſtraints, they have no inward principle or tenderneſſe of conſcience, to make them loath an ill way, as *Joſeph* had. *Gen.* 42.18. but count every thing right enough which they are able to effect, and goe on as far as their power will reach; for, *They practiſe it, becauſe it is in the power of their hands.*

Ver. 2. *And they covet fields; and take* them *by violence: and houſes, and take* them *away: ſo they oppreſſe a man and his houſe, even a man and his heritage.*

He gives an inſtance of that general challenge, *ver.* 1. and what

were the evils they plotted and acted: in that when they ſaw houſes and fields that lay commodiouſly for them, they did covet them, and violently deprive the true Owners of them, whereby not only a mans ſelf, but his family and poſterity were oppreſſed, by taking away, not ſome of his means only, but his very heritage, which belonged unto him by the Law of God and man. *Doct.* 1. Covetouſneſſe is a root of much evil and wickedneſſe, and will embark men in deſperate and violent courſes; for, *They covet and take by violence.* 2. It is an high aggravation of oppreſſion, when the oppreſſor is not ſtraitned with neceſſity and want, driving him on ſuch courſes; but his covetous diſpoſition is the only cauſe of all his miſcarriage; for, here the quarrel is, that becauſe they *covet*, therefore, *they take by violence.* 3. Covetouſneſſe given way unto, and entertained in mens hearts, will drive them beyond all bounds and moderation; for, *They covet fields and houſes*: every thing they get, ſerves but as a bait to draw them on further; ſo dangerous is it once to tranſgreſs the bounds of contentment preſcribed by God. 4. Albeit covetouſneſſe be a lawleſſe ſin, and Oppreſſors think every thing good purchaſe, which they can compaſs; yet in Gods account violent uſurpation is no right; for, however they *take away*, yet it is ſtil *the mans heritage.* 5. Not only the wants of ſuch as are preſently oppreſſed, but all the wants of their poſterity will be laid to the Oppreſſors charge, and cry to God againſt them; for, *they oppreſs a man and his houſe*; they ruine him, and his family and off-ſpring, by taking away his houſes and heritage, which are a conſtant livelihood.

Ver. 3. *Therefore thus ſaith the* LORD, *Behold againſt this family do I deviſe an evil, from which ye ſhall not remove your necks, neither ſhall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil.*

The Lord pronounceth ſentence againſt them for theſe ſins, and explains that *Wo* which he had threatned, *ver.* 1. ſhewing that the Lord is about to bring on ſuch a judgement and ſad time, as ſhould effectually and irreſiſtibly ſeize upon them, and lay their pride and bring them down. *Whence learne,* 1. In times of violent oppreſſion the Lord is not to be looked on as one miſregarding, or as an idle Spectator, but as a Lord, ready to appear for the oppreſſed in a remarkable way; for,

*There-*

*Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, &c.* 2. The Lords Word ought to be received and believed as a ſure evidence, that he will ſo appear, albeit the performance ſeem to be delayed: for, *Thus ſaith Jehovah:* we ought to judge according to what he ſaith, and not according to what we think. 3. The Lord will recompence all his delayes in executing vengeance for ſin, with the ſeverity of it when it comes; therefore, in oppoſition to their *deviſing iniquity*, *verſe* 1. (that they might execute it well, as they thought) *the Lord deviſeth an evil*, ſaith he, that is, it ſhall be as ſore and ſharp an evil, as if it had been moſt ſeriouſly deviſed, and all the time of delay had been imployed for that effect. 4. Sin publickly acted without controlment, will bring on judgments againſt a whole people; *Therefore*, (becauſe oppreſſion was committed publickly) *againſt this family do I deviſe an evil*; that is, againſt this whole Nation, *Amos* 3.1,2. even the notorious ſins of private perſons, (much more of publick Miniſters of Juſtice) not being puniſhed: or ſuch ſins becoming univerſal, cannot but bring judgments upon a whole Land. 5. However Oppreſſors may think to ſhift the Lords viſitations, yet when they come they ſhall ſeize upon them, and their violence ſhall be met with afflictions, which they cannot ſhake off; for, it is *an evil from which ye ſhall not remove your necks.* 6. Albeit men alſo dream, that if they cannot exempt themſelves from judgments, yet they will courageouſly and undauntedly bear out under them; yet the Lord by his rods will make the moſt haughty to ſtoop, for, *Neither ſhall ye go haughtily.* 7. God hath our time, and the revolutions thereof ſo in his own power, as he can thereby when he will, cauſe the ſtouteſt to fall before him; therefore it is ſubjoined as a reaſon why they ſhall not walk haughtily, for, *this time is evil*: God ſhall make the times to cruſh them. 8. Men by their tranſgreſſions, do provoke the Lord to make their time bitter and evil unto them, wherein otherwiſe they might comfortably ſerve their generations: for, becauſe they had oppreſſed, *&c.* therefore this time is evil.

Ver. 4. *In that day ſhall one take up a Parable againſt you, and lament with a doleful lamentation,* and *ſay, We be utterly ſpoiled, he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away, he hath divided our fields.*

Their calamity is further ſet forth, that it ſhould not be ordinary, but the matter of a Proverb in all mens mouths, and of a bitter lamentation, compoſed by themſelves to bewaile their calamities, or by their enemies counterfeiting their ſorrow; wherein they ſhould bewaile their utter deſolation, in that the Lord had transferred the poſſeſſion of the holy land, (which he had given as a portion to his people,) to their enemies: and had not onely caſt his people out of it, but turning away in anger, had given it to the enemies to divide it among them; and ſo had put them out of hope to return to it again: all which relates eſpecially to the caſe of the ten Tribes, whoſe lands were thus poſſeſſed by the *Aſſyrians*, 2 *Kings* 17. 24. *Doct.* 1. Sinning againſt God with an high hand, will at laſt make the ſinner a remarkeable ſpectacle of juſtice, and will end in bitterneſſe and lamentation; for, *In that day ſhall one take up a Parable*, (or *Proverb*) *againſt you, and lament with a doleful lamentation.* 2. The ſinners deſert is to be utterly ruined without hope of reſtitution, and to be left in that condition to bewaile their want and miſery; for, this is the ſum of their lamentation, that they are utterly ruined, put away from their land, their enemies dividing it as their owne inheritance. 3. The ſeeing of God as a party, and affliction as flowing from his anger, they make the afflicted's lamentation yet more bitter; for, ſo doe they lament: *He hath changed and removed, turning away he hath divided.* 4. The Lords judgements upon a ſinfull people, will ſurprize them with aſtoniſhment, and be more ſad then any thing they did expect or dreame of, when they were wallowing in their iniquities; for, ſo much doth their admiration import: *How hath he removed it from me?*

**Ver. 5.** *Therefore thou ſhalt have none that ſhall caſt a cord by lot in the Congregation of the* LORD.

Their utter deſolation is here poſitively denounced by God in confirmation of their lamentation, that being caſt out of their land, they ſhould want the benefit of dividing their inheritances by lot, before the LORD in his Congregation, as of old *Joſhua* had done, *Joſh.* 18. 4, 6, 10. and they uſed to doe on ſeveral occaſions, eſpecially every *Jubilee*, when they returned to their poſſeſſion; but ſhould remaine exiled, and their enemies in poſ-

poſſeſſion of their Country. *Doct.* 1. It is a bitter caſe, when an hard condition is not onely feared or apprehended by us, but proves in reality as ſad as we imagine: For, here the Lord confirms their lamentation in apprehending deſolation, by a poſitive ſentence; *Thou ſhalt have none to caſt a cord by lot.* 2. Iniquity will make a Land ſpue out even a confederate people, and detaine them in exile, deſtitute of their wonted priviledges; This is imported in that threatning, *Thou ſhalt have none to caſt a cord, &c.* 3. The cauſes procuring judgements are ſtill to be taken along in our thoughts with the judgement; *Therefore*, ſaith he, becauſe of theſe ſins mentioned, *ver.* 1, 2. *Thou ſhalt have none, &c.* This will make us juſtifie God in his afflicting, and will ſet the afflicted on work by repentance to make up their outward loſſes in God. 4. Afflictions will be ſo much the more bitter, as the mercies of which wee are deprived by them, have been given unto us by a ſpecial providence, and as a ſigne of Gods favour; for ſo the land from which they are to be baniſhed, is a land which they had *by lot in the Congregation of the Lord*; that is, a land divided to them by eſpecial providence of God, and wherein the Congregation of the Lord was. See *Pſ.* 47. 4. and 137. 1.

Ver. 6. *Propheſie ye not*, ſay they to them that *propheſie, they ſhall not propheſie to them*, that *they ſhall not take ſhame.*

The ſecond accuſation is, for their contempt of, and oppoſition unto Gods Word and Meſſengers: the ſenſe of the words, (which in the original are conciſe and ſhort) is; when the wicked heard the Prophets of God threaten ſin ſo ſharply, they could not endure this ſound doctrine, but either would have them ſilent, as *Amos* 7. 10, 11, 12, 13. or would limit them to preach onely what they pleaſed, as their falſe Prophets did; and ſo ſome read the words, *Propheſie ye not, let theſe*, (to wit, the time-ſerving Prophets, and ſuch as would follow their way) *propheſie*; upon this the Lord threatens to adde this to their judgements, that he will take away his Prophets, and hereby give them up as dogs, to whom holy things are not to be caſt, and prevent the ſhame and ignominy which his Prophets ſuffered at their hands, as *Matth.* 7. 6. or (as the words may be read by way of

interrogation, *If they shal not propheſie unto theſe, ſhall they take no ſhame?* although they were rid of faithfull meſſengers to warne them, yet that would not hold off jugements, nor exempt them from ſhame and confuſion. *Doct.* 1. The Lords Word in the mouth of his meſſengers, ought to be refreſhing, and a meanes of fructifying unto the Church; and will prove ſo, except it be to ſuch as are neer unto curſing; therefore is *propheſying* in the Original called *dropping*, by a name taken from raine, which refreſheth and fructifieth the earth. 2. A declining time, and a faithfull Miniſtry will be ſtill at odds and contending; decliners would either be rid of the Word and Miniſtry altogether; or if they think that too groſſe, yet they will allow of none but ſuch as are made to their minde; not of ſuch as may bee inſtrumentall to frame them according to Gods minde: *Propheſie yee not, ſay they to them that propheſie*; or *Propheſie yee not, let theſe propheſie.* 3. Howſoever, the Lord will have his truth publiſhed, ſo ſong as hee ſeeth fitting, or hath uſe for it, oppoſe who will; (and ſo the words may be read, that when the wicked ſaid, *Propheſie not*, the Lord anſwered, *They ſhall propheſie,*) yet when men become ſo deſperately wicked, as not only not to care for the Word, but ſtudie to affront and injure the Carriers of it; it is righteous with God to deprive them of it, for a judgment to them, and the good of his wronged ſervants: *They ſhall not propheſie to them, that they ſhall not take ſhame*; See, *Ezek.* 3. 26 4 Albeit wicked men think all ſure enough if they were freed from that eye-ſore of a reproving and threatning Word and Miniſtry, yet that would put them never a whit the further from judgments for ſin; for ſo much doth that other reading hold forth; *If they ſhall not propheſie, ſhall they take no ſhame?* as if he ſaid, will that exempt them from judgments, that upon their contempt the Word is removed? No verily; but as it is a judgment in it ſelf, ſo it is a preſage of more following.

Ver. 7. *O thou that art named the houſe of Jacob, is the Spirit of the* LORD *ſtraitned?* are *theſe his doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?*

Unto this accuſation and threatning the Lord ſubjoyns a ſad ex-

expoſtulation with this people, now ſo far degenerated, as thus to contemn and oppoſe his Meſſengers; as if they might limit his Spirit to ſpeak only what pleaſed them: or, as if his Spirit were ſtraitned to do them good, and preach comforts, if they were fit for them; that he muſt only threaten, and poſeth them, if their wayes and doings were approved of God, and ſuch as called for comfortable doctrine; and whether they could alledge that threatnings and judgments were his uſual way of dealing with his people in which he delighted, if he were not provoked thereunto by their ſin, and appeales to themſelves if his words did not both ſpeak and perform good things, and would prove ſo to them if they were holy; and conſequently it was not he nor his Prophets, but themſelves that were to blame, that the Word ſpake hard things unto them, and that accordingly they were puniſhed. *Doct.* 1. It is a deplorable caſe, and ſadly to be lamented, when men ſtand in oppoſition to the Word of God, and the Carriers thereof: ſo much doth this expoſtulation, and theſe preſſing interrogatories imply. 2. Men may both think and do many things with great boldneſſe, which yet if they ſhould ſeriouſly think upon, they would be forced to condemn and finde a witneſs againſt in their own boſomes: for, theſe queſtions put to their conſciences, imply, that God had a witneſs for him there, and they durſt not ſay nor do as they did, if their conſciences were put to it as in his ſight. 3. Many have, and ſtudy to keep up a name which they are ill worthy of, and no way anſwerable to it. *O thou that art named the houſe of Jacob*, ſaith he, but no way like that which *Jacob* was, and ſhould be: See, *John* 8.40. *Hoſ.* 12.3. 4. God can diſcover betwixt ſhewes and ſubſtance, and will ſee a fault in ſuch as glory in faire titles, for he calls them as they are: *Thou art named the houſe of Jacob*, and haſt but a name. 5. It is an evidence that a viſible Church is degenerated whatever ſhew they have, when they turn oppoſers of the Word of the Lord in the mouth of his ſervants, and of his ſervants for their meſſage cauſe, it being the true glory of the Church to have meſſengers carrying Gods mind unto them, and to entertain the meſſage and meſſengers as becometh; for, it is upon this account they get this title, *Thou art named*, *&c.* 6. Such as oppoſe and fight againſt the Word of God and his Meſſengers, do in effect fight againſt the Spirit of the Lord, whoſe Word it is; for, theſe oppoſers are challenged, as *ſtraitning the Spirit of the Lord.* 7. It is an high preſumption and in-

jury done to the Spirit, to think to impriſon and deny him liberty in the mouth of his ſervants to ſpeak any thing but what men pleaſe: for, *Is the ſpirit of the Lord ſtraitned?* imports, that it was not ſeemly they ſhould limit him in giving Commiſſion to his ſervants. 8. The Lord hath a ſtore-houſe of ſpirit to bring forth comforts, and of power to produce mercies, if his people were fit for them; for, *Is the ſpirit of the Lord ſtraitned?* imports alſo, that it was not for want of fulneſſe in his Spirit, to publiſh or performe good things, that the Prophets got only commiſſion to threaten; ſee, *Iſa.* 50 2. 9. When the Lord ſends forth ſad threatnings in the mouths of his ſervants, it becomes a people ſeriouſly to examine their wayes, to ſee them diſapproved of God, and deſerving ſuch entertainment: therefore he leads them from quarrelling with the Spirit of God or his ſervants, ſeriouſly to conſider, *Are theſe his doings?* that is, whether their own wayes are agreeable to the law, or ſuch as the Spirit of God works in his people. 10. The Lords ordinary way of dealing with his people, in which hee delights, is mercie; for, *Are theſe his doings?* imports alſo, that however hee did now threaten and deal harſhly with them, yet they might be abundantly convinced that it was not his uſuall way ſo to doe, nor a courſe in which he took pleaſure, if their caſe did not call for it. See *Mic.* 7.18. *Lam.* 3.33. 11. That which God looks to and requires in his people, is not ſo much their profeſſion & ſpeaking, as their walking and carriage, and that they ſtudy a conſtant courſe of uprightneſſe and ſincerity, although they cannot attain to perfection; for, it is required *that they walk uprightly.* 12. As the upright walker will need the Word much for direction and encouragement; ſo to ſuch the Word ſpeaks onely good, however they may reade and apply it wrong ſometimes, by reaſon of their diſtempers and fears, and may miſtake when the Word ſpeaks againſt their corruptions, which is without prejudice to their ſincerity, and when the Word ſpeaks hard things, whereby their further good is promoted in the end: for, *do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?* 13. The Words ſaying of good, is indeed a doing of good, not only becauſe comfortable meſſages do encourage, ſtrengthen and revive the heart; but alſo in regard of the certaine performance of what the Word ſaith: when it is ſaid, it may be counted done; *My words doe good.* 14. The goodneſſe of God to his people may deeply convince and humble them, who by ſin provoke him to doe otherwiſe;

There-

Therefore is all this ſet forth to be in God, that their ſin may be ſeen great which cauſeth ſuch ſtrange dealing.

**Ver. 8.** *Even of late my people is riſen up as an enemy: yee pull off the robe with the garment from them that paſſe by ſecurely, as men averſe from war.*

A third accuſation is for their cruel robbery, whereby he alſo ſets forth the ſad fruits of their contemning the Prophets, and the true cauſe why God, by their Miniſtery, handled them ſo roughly; The ſumme of the accuſation is, that they whoſe fathers had been famous for valour in Wars, and defending the countrey againſt a common enemy, were now of late turned robbers of the innocent; and, as cruel enemies, did take away both the upper and neather garment from thoſe who were travelling peaceably, as minding no War; or did ſo deale with them, as if they had taken them in Warre; and ſent them away ſtripped, as if they had been in a battell. *Whence learne.* 1. Contempt of, and oppoſition unto Gods Word and Meſſengers, turnes men barbarous and inhumane, without all civility; and men following ſuch courſes cannot expect that the Word ſhould ſpeak peace to them; for, this is a fruit of their oppoſing the Prophets, that they were given over to ſuch cruelty; and is the cauſe why hard things were propheſied. 2. The degenerating of men from former good wayes, and the preſent evils of the time, are much to be obſerved, and hammered on by the ſervants of God; for, this is the ſubject of his accuſation, that *even of late*, or *yeſterday*, they were thus degenerated. 3. As declining profeſſours are ordinarily plagued with ſingular profanity, ſo profeſſion and priviledges will ſerve to aggravate the guilt thereof; therefore, howſoever they were onely *in name the houſe of Jacob, ver 7.* yet in the challenge the Lord gives them their titles, *my people is riſen up, &c.* that ſince they would be accounted ſo, hee would make uſe of it to their diſadvantage who would not walke anſwerable to what they pretended to. 4. Oppreſſion of others, and for men ſo to carry themſelves towards friends as open and violent enemies uſe to do, is a practiſe not beſeeming ſuch as call themſelves the people

people of God; for, this is the challenge, *My people is riſen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe, &c.*

Ver. 9. *The women of my people have ye caſt out from their pleaſant houſes, from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.*

Hee inſiſts in the accuſation, and gives a further inſtance of their inhumanity, in their carriage toward women and children, whom Warrs ordinarily ſpare; they caſt women violently out of their houſes, where they lived pleaſantly, and by bringing children unto ſlavery and miſery, did for ever deprive them of that dignity allowed to them by God as his people. *Doct.* 1. There are none of the children of men but in divine providence may meete with their own ſhare of trials, and ſhould look for them; for heare very *women* and *children* are not exempted more then men. 2. However the Church and particular members thereof may deſerve afflictions at the Lords hand, yet theſe ſame afflictions will endeere them to him, at leaſt in ſo farre as to be a ground of challenge againſt inſtruments, that they have medled with ſuch; wherefore what-ever theſe afflicted ones were otherwiſe, yet in their trouble, and in the challenge againſt oppreſſers, they are *the women of my people.* 3. God, the preſerver of men, hath a ſpecial regard to the weaker ſexe and tenderer years of perſons; and will aggravate injuries done to them from ſuch conſiderations; as here, *ye have caſt out women, and taken away glory from their children,* or, little *ones.* 4. Pleaſures and tender uſage are not to be looked upon by thoſe who enjoy them as abiding things, or a conſtant allowance, but, conſidering them as tranſient, they ought to look for changes when the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to call to it; for ſo much are we taught by the experience of theſe tender *women caſt out of their pleaſant houſes.* 5. There is an eſpecial glory allowed by God unto his Church, whereby ſhe may be ſeparated from all people, which the Lord wil maintain her in, againſt all who would deprive her thereof; this is ſignified by that external glory, and the priviledges conferred on *Iſrael,* (called, *my glory,* becauſe allowed of him) which now he challenges oppreſſors for depriving their children of while they were put in a condition not beſeeming the free people of God;

God; *From their children ye have taken away my glory.* See *Exod.* 33. 16. 6. Perſeverance in an ill way doth exceedingly aggravate the ſinfulneſs thereof; *ye have taken away glory for ever*; that is, without giving over that wicked way, or ceaſing to rob. 7. It may alſo be interpreted, that by making children bondmen, they aimed to deprive them of their glory perpetually; and ſo however children might be relieved from bondage, yet they are reckoned with according to their aim, and the nature of their work: and it teacheth, whatever the Lord may do in interpoſing to moderate the afflictions unjuſtly inflicted by men; yet inſtruments muſt anſwer to God for all that the nature of their work tended to, and for all they intended in it.

Ver. 10, *Ariſe ye and depart, for this* is *not* your *reſt, becauſe it is polluted, it ſhall deſtroy* you, *even with a ſore deſtruction.*

The Lords ſentence and threatning for this wickedneſſe is, that as they had caſt others out of their houſes: ſo the Lord would baniſh them from the holy Land, which was given them for a reſt, only on condition of Covenant-keeping: and that, becauſe they had polluted the Land by ſin; therefore it ſhould violently caſt them out. *Doct.* 1. It is incident to men when they have committed great wickedneſſe, yet to promiſe to themſelves peace by reaſon of ſome external priviledges; for, this charge, *Ariſe ye and depart*, implies, that notwithſtanding of ſin, they were not thinking of removing, becauſe there land was a *reſt*. 2. Sinne doth provoke God to turne up-ſide-down great priviledges, which are conferred upon a viſible Church on condition of her obedience; yea, it doth provoke him to prove himſelf ſuperior, of whom they hold all their enjoyments, and to deprive them of reſt and quiet who were reſtleſſe in ſin: for, whereas the Land of *Canaan* was given for a reſt, *Pſal.* 95. 11. now the Lord ſummons them to remove, and threatens it ſhould not be a reſt becauſe of their ſin; *Ariſe ye, and depart, for this is not your reſt.* See *Numb.* 14. 34. 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. 3. Men by their ſinning do not only ſet themſelves againſt God, but do pollute and defile all the creatures and mercies given them of God, by imploying them to the diſhonour of God;

God; for, the promiſed Land *is polluted* by theſe ſinners. See *Lev.* 18.25,28. Man going in rebellion drawes many creatures, abuſed by him, away with him. 4. Mercies being given that we might ſerve God with them, and not defile them; therefore it is juſt with God, that what we diſhonour him in or by, be taken away: *This is not a reſt, becauſe it is polluted.* 5. Abuſe of Gods mercies draweth on ſharpeſt judgements of any; for, *it* (that is, the Land) *ſhal deſtroy you even with a ſore deſtruction.* This the land did, not only in ſpewing them out as it did the *Canaanites*, *Lev.* 18.28. as loathing to bear or feed them who diſhonour God: but in that it was the great cauſe of their ſore judgement that they had polluted a Land of promiſe, where God in his Ordinances dwelt: and ſo it had been better for them, when God ſhould reckon with them, that they had dwelt elſewhere.

Ver. 11. *If a man walking in the ſpirit of falſehood, do lie,* ſaying, *I will propheſie unto thee of wine and of ſtrong drink, he ſhall even be the Prophet of this people.*

In the fourth place they are accuſed for that, however they oppoſed true Prophets, yet they did approve of, and delight in falſe Prophets, and ſuch as pretending to inſpirations, and to be in office Prophets, would flatter them, and without warrant, promiſe proſperity to ſuch as were continuing in ſin: *Whence learn,* 1. The moſt profane in the viſible Church may yet deſire ſome ſhew of divine inſtitutions and ordinances, and ſome ſort of divine approbation to their way, if they can have it; for, *he ſhall even be a Prophet to this people*; imports, that they would not willingly want Prophets, but deſire to have them, provided they go their way; that ſo albeit they reject true Prophets, yet they may have Prophets, and may ſeem not to want divine approbation; men may be profane enough, albeit they come not to the height of rejecting all ordinances, nor openly to profeſs they care not for Gods approbation. 2. It is no new thing to ſee men pretending to the Spirit of God, and revelations and light from him, who are but deceivers, if not deceived alſo, and ſent for a plague to a ſinful people; for, there are, who *walk in the Spirit* (that is, pretend to inſpirations

tions as Prophets) and yet all this is but falſhood, and their doctrine a lie. 3. There will never be falſe Prophets and clawbacks wanting, to humour and ſoothe up a declining people; for, it is imported, there will be ſuch as *propheſie of wine, &c.* 4. As it is a great ſnare and judgement to a people to finde any ſhelter againſt naked truth, and Prophets againſt Prophets; ſo theſe falſe Prophets are diſcouragements to the true Meſſengers of God, while ſuch do flatter thoſe whom faithfull Meſſengers threaten; for, it is the peoples judgment, that they have prophets to oppoſe to thoſe whom they reject, *ver.* 9. See *Jer.* 18.18. And it is a great cauſe why *Micahs* threatnings take no effect, that they in the mean time *propheſie of wine and ſtrong drink*: ſuch was *Micah*'s trial when he had to do with *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* 22.12,13,14, *&c.* 5. Such as pretend to any eminency in Gods houſe or ſervice, without his call or approbation, are ordinarily branded with badges of his diſpleaſure; for, theſe *walking in the Spirit*, or pretending to revelation, are plagued either with deluſion or impudency, (as ſuch ordinarily are, who abuſe light moſt,) in that they dare *propheſie of wine, and ſtrong drink* to a rebellious people. 6. Albeit the Lord may for a time forbear groſſe ſinners; yea, and plague them with proſperity alſo, yet it is falſe doctrine to preach peace and proſperity to a profane people, ſo as if God approved of them when he gives them proſperity, or as if any proſperity they got were not ripening them for ſorer judgements: for, as theſe falſe Prophets *lyed*, in reſpect they wanted a revelation and commiſſion to deliver ſuch a Doctrine, when on the contrary God was threatning that people: ſo it is ſtill a lye in theſe termes, *to propheſie of wine and ſtrong drink* to ſuch a people. 7. As it is a woful condition, when all that the viſible Church is ſet upon, is pleaſure and proſperity, and all they have to do with Prophets, is to make them glad with hopes thereof: (he is their choice, not who ſpeaks to them of their ſin and Gods grace, but *who propheſieth of wine,*) ſo a people are in a deſperate caſe, when they delight onely in ſuch Doctrine as may pleaſe their fancy, and will not admit of freedom in Doctrine. Therefore it is a matter of challenge, and a cauſe of Gods contemning of them, (as being *not my people*, but *this people*) that ſuch a one ſhall *even be the Prophet of this people*, and not ſuch as faithful *Micah*. See *Iſai.* 30.10. *Jer.* 5.31.

Ver.

Ver. 12. *I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee: I will surely gather the remnant of Israel, I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold, they shall make great noise by reason of* the multitude of *men.*

13. *The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up, and have passed thorow the gate, and are gone out by it, and their King shall pass before them, and the* LORD *on the head of them.*

The Lord in the close of the Chapter sweetens the former threatnings with promises of restitution of his *Israel* under Christ; wherein are contained their recollection and gathering, that Christ as their shepherd shall gather them in one, shall feed, secure and multiply them, *ver.* 12. that all impediments shal be taken out of their way, that might hinder their progresse, and that their march shall be stately, and their conduct safe; Christ their King who is the Lord, going before them as their general on the head of them. *Whence learn,* 1. In the throng of greatest displeasure, the truly godly are allowed comfort, that they be not crushed with threatnings, whereof they are most apprehensive by reason of their tenderness; for, in the midst of these threatnings, *Jacob* and *Israel* get a promise; See, *Matth.* 28.4,5. 2. The children of God ought to study much the certainty of Promises, that they may without hesitation rely upon them; *I will surely assemble, I will surely gather*, saith he, or *in assembling assemble*, which imports his persisting in that work till he perfect it. 3. Spiritual restauration by Christ, is ample matter of comfort to all believers in times of publick calamities: for that is the substance of this promise held forth for their comfort: it was their comfort under the Law to foresee it, and ought to be ours for to enjoy it; See *John* 8.56. *Luke* 10.23,24. 4. As no vicissitude of dispensations hath buried in oblivion that Covenant made with *Jacob* and his seed, so the Catholick Church of Believers of all Nations have right to the spiritual promises made to *Jacob* and his seed: for these to whom the promises are made are called *Jacob and Israel*, to shew

ſhew unto the ſeed of *Iſrael* that he would aſſemble them, being mindful of his Covenant; and to confirm all his Elect, that by believing in Chriſt they are made his *Iſrael*, and heirs to *Iſraels* promiſes. 5. Chriſt the great ſhepherd, will want none of his choſen ones, howſoever ſcattered, diſperſed, and far from him, but will have them all gathered and brought in to the fold of his Church; I *wil ſurely aſſemble Jacob all of thee*; I *will ſurely gather the remnant of Iſrael*, ſaith the Lord to ſcattered *Iſrael*, and to his ſcattered Elect, through the world; See *John* 10.16. 6. Chriſt, having gathered his people as in one flock, will do the duty of a faithful ſhepherd, in feeding and ſecuring of them from dangers: I *will put them together as the ſheep of Bozrah*, (a place in *Edom* or *Moab*, where there were many flocks and good paſture, 1 *Chron.* 1.43,44. *Jer.* 48.24. *and* 2 *Kings* 3.4.) *as the flock in the midſt of their fold*. 7. The Lord, who of remnants can make multitudes, will in his own time bleſſe his Church with increaſe and multiplication of Converts, and hereby will make up the loſs of their ſcatterings and ſufferings: *The remnant ſhal make a noiſe by reaſon of the multitude of men*; See, *Iſai.* 49.20,21. 8. Howſoever there may be many difficulties in the wayes of God, which his people are to follow; yet a people waiting upon him ſhall find impediments removed to their hand; and that they have nothing to do, but go on till they dip their feet in *Jordans* brink, and he will make it dry; for, *the breaker is come up before them; they have broken up and have paſſed through the gate, and are gone out by it*. The ſpeech alludes to the cuſtome of armies who uſually ſend ſome before to prepare the way, and break through ſtait paſſages that the army may march without trouble, Paſſes being opened in all places; See *Iſai.* 57.14. and 62.10. 9. Chriſts Church doth not want a King to go out and in before her, to protect, defend and guide her in her way, and as a General to fight her battels; for, *Their King ſhal paſs before them, and the Lord in the head of them*, 10. There is none to be acknowledged as having kingly power in or over the Church, as ſhe is a Church, but he who it the Lord JEHOVAH, for, *their King paſſing before them, is JEHOVAH in the head of them*: that is, their General in the forefront of them, as the word is tranſlated, 2 *Chr.* 20.27. See *Hoſ.* 1.11. *Iſ.* 52.12.

CHAP.

# CHAP. III.

THe Prophet having hitherto faithfully diſcovered the ſins of the body of this people, and denounced Gods judgments becauſe of ſin; he comes more particularly to tax the Rulers both in Church and State; eſpecially in *Judah*, and to threaten them for their ſins; and this he doth, 1. Severally, in relation to their own particular puniſhments; The Princes, for that they ought to know right and wrong, and walk accordingly, and yet were moſt perverſe and inhumane in oppreſſion, *v.* 1, 2, 3. are threatned, that in their ſtrait they ſhall not be owned of God, *ver.* 4. The falſe Prophets, who deluded the people, and preached ſo as might be moſt ſubſervient to their baſe ends, *ver.* 5. are threatned with ſuch confuſion as ſhould make them aſhamed of their trade, *ver.* 6, 7. whereas he, a faithful man ſhould bear out in his duty, *ver.* 8. 2 He deals with them conjunctly, in relation to the judgement, which they by their ſin procured to come on the Church of God: whereas the Rulers perverted Juſtice, *ver.* 9. and built the holy City with goods taken by oppreſſion, *ver.* 10. and generally, both Rulers and Teachers were corrupted with bribes, and love to gain, and yet would preſumptuouſly rely on God, *ver.* 11. therefore he threatens, that for their ſake *Sion* ſhould be laid deſolate, *v.* 12.

Ver. 1. *AND I ſaid, Hear I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the houſe of Iſrael,* is it *not for you to know judgement?*

HEre he challengeth the Rulers in peace and War, for affected ignorance of the Law of God, and layeth a ground for aggreaging their wickedneſs, in that it concerned them to be better acquainted with the Will of God in the matter of Juſtice and equity then others, and ſo ought to be exemplary in their knowledg and

and obedience, (knowledge including consequent affection and practice) whereas they in their practise proved themselves ignorant, or despisers of the Law. Wee need not curiously enqure, whether by *Jacob* the Kingdome of *Judah* be understood, as by *Israel*, the ten tribes; seeing the latter part at least of the threatnings in this Chapter, is especially directed against *Judah*, *Ier.* 26.18. but by these names we are generally to understand that people which were come of *Iudah* otherwise called *Israel*. *Doct.* 1. When a land in general is culpable of defection, rulers in Church and State have their owne eminent guilt in it: This is imported in the Prophets scope, while as having reproved the whole body of the people, he now comes to challenge the rulers in an especial manner: *Hear O heads of Iacob.* 2. Faithful Ministers ought not only to inveigh against sinne in general, or of the commonalty only, but in particular ought to reprehend the sins of every ranke, even of Rulers; for, so doth *Micah*'s practice teach. 3. Men in greatest eminency are bound to heare God speaking by his messengers, and to receive what messages are sent unto them, as being under the law as well as others; *Heare O heads of Iacob, and ye Princes of the house of Israel.* 4. As Rulers especially are unwilling to be brought to an account for their wayes by the Ministry of the Word, so Ministers are bound to omit no point of discretion, and tender insinuation, which may consist with their fidelity and zeale against sin, and which may be instrumental to make the word take, and not to be stumbled at; for so doth *Micah*'s way of intreaty teach; *Hear, I pray you,* which imports both the Rulers averseneſse to heare, and his tender condescendence that they may heare. 5. Whatever may be the success of a faithful Minister in the discharge of his duty, yet his faithfulneſse and diligence will be matter of peace to him, when the conscience reflecteth upon it; as here *Micah* gives a comfortable account of his pains; *I said, Hear &c.* 6. Beside the general obligation lying upon all men, (especially within the visible Church,) to know and obey the will of God, it is especially incumbent to rulers and great ones among the Lords people so to do; as being by reason of their education, means, encouragements, leasure, offices, &c. enabled with advantages, and bound to know more then others, and to put their knowledge in practice, that they may be examples to others: *O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel, is it not for you to know judgment?*

7. It is a good evidence that a man is one who delights to know and obey the revealed Will of God in all things, when hee is carefull in the matter of his particular ſtation to walk by that rule; therefore he puts them to tryal in the matter of *knowing judgement*, or juſtice and equity, which belonged to them in their particular ſtation, as being Judges to the people. 8. Whatever men may oppoſe to the challenges of Miniſters in the matter of affected ignorance, or wilful neglect of knowne duties; yet theſe excuſes will not ſatisfie their owne conſciences, when they are ſeriouſly put to it; therefore the Prophet poſeth them with a queſtion which they could not deny; *Is it not for you to know judgement?*

Ver. 2. *Who hate the good, and love the evill, who pluck off their skin from off them, and their fleſh from off their bones.*

3. *Who alſo eate the fleſh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as fleſh within the cauldron.*

In oppoſition to what they ought to be, hee ſets forth their contrary diſpoſition and practiſe, that they were abhorrers of what was good, and lovers of ill; and they did ſo cruelly oppreſſe and undo the Lords people, by taking away the very means of their ſubſiſtence and livelihood, as if they had flayed their skin from off them, eaten their fleſh, and broken their bones to boyle them for meat, as Butchers and Cookes doe, with beaſts for mans food. *Doct.* 1. The Lord doth not reckon that men know ought, when the truth being knowne is not affected, nor any endeavours uſed to put it in practiſe; for ſo doth he cleare here their *not knowing of judgement*, in that they *hated the good*, and oppreſſed. 2. The Lord reſpects chiefly the diſpoſition and affection of mens hearts towards good or ill, it being a deſperate condition, when not onely practiſe is out of courſe; but affection alſo is alienated from God, and inclined to evil; *Who hate the good, and love the evil.* 3. Whatever oppreſſors may pretend to be the cauſe of their cruelty toward their inferiours, as if they ſtood in need, and behooved to live of their owne, &c. yet the Lord

ſeeth

ſeeth it to flow from their perverſe and corrupt affections: *Therefore*, ſaith he of oppreſſors, *Ye hate the good, and love the evil.* 4. Greateſt perverſity is uſually found in ſuch, as ought, and may, and will not, or neglect to make uſe of ſuch meanes, as might promote piety and juſtice; for, all this perveſitie is in the heads of *Jacob*, who had meanes and occaſion to ſet them on to do otherwiſe; *Ye are they*, ſaith he, *who hate the good, &c.* 5. Oppreſſion is in Gods account inhumane butchery, and murther, in a degree far above ſimple ſlaughter, while the oppreſſed pine for want, and the oppreſſours (as barbarians or wilde beaſts) eate that which is the poores very life and fleſh; ſo much doth this deſcription of oppreſſion teach us; *Who pluck off their skins from off them, and their fleſh from off their bones, who alſo eate the fleſh of my people, &c.* 6. Albeit Magiſtrates and great men thinke themſelves to be above all law, yet they have no power to oppreſſe a people, (eſpecially if they be Gods people,) and deale with them as they will, but muſt bee accountable for their carriage toward them; and howſoever the oppreſſed or others dare not challenge them for their injurious dealing, yet there is a God who will lay it to their charge; for, here they are challenged by God for their oppreſſing his people.

Ver. 4. *Then ſhall they cry unto the LORD, but hee will not heare them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themſelves ill in their doings.*

Followeth their particular ſentence and judgement by way of retaliation, that as they oppreſſing the poore, had a deafe eare to their cryes: ſo they would meet with judgement without mercy or compaſſion, and ſhould not be owned of God, though (out of feeeling of their trouble) they ſeeke unto him. *Doct.* 1. The greateſt of men, and they who moſt wickedly forget God, ſhall at one time or other be ſenſibly in Gods reverence, and their errand come in his way; for, ſo doth this threatning import, that they ſhall be put to ſeek God, whom otherwiſe they miſregarded; *Then ſhall they cry.* 2. Natural men may make ſome ſhew of ſeeking God in trouble; not in faith, or out of love, but out of ſenſe of trouble; *Then* (that is, when the common calamities for-

merly threatned, or their owne particular corrections for their ſin, are lying on) *ſhall they cry.* 3. It is righteous with God not to owne this crying of the wicked in their trouble, becauſe of their former wickedneſſe and preſent unſoundneſſe, and particularly, that he may recompence them, for not hearkening to the cry of the poore, oppreſſed by them: *They ſhal cry unto the LORD, but he will not heare them.* 4 It is extreame miſery to bee deſerted totally of God in trouble, and to want his favour and ſenſe of reconciliation, which might ſupport them in any extremity; for, it is here the extremity of miſery, that in their trouble, *he will even hide his face from them at that time.* 5 God, by not owning of a man in trouble, would have wickedneſſe ſeen and lamented as the cauſe of it, (however he ſeem alſo to do this ſometime that he may try the faith of his children; ) for, ſo doth this reaſon import: *As they have behaved themſelves ill in their doings.*

**Ver. 5.** *Thus ſaith the LORD concerning the Prophets that make my poople erre, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouthes, they even prepare warre againſt him.*

In the next place he accuſeth the falſe Prophets, who by falſe doctrine deceived the people, and who by preaching peace did in effect deſtroy peoples ſoules with deluſion, (as if theſe dogs had devoured the Lords ſheep with their teeth) or, they flatter'd the people in ſin that they might get ſomewhat to eate, and devoure their ſubſtance; wherein if they were not ſatisfied and humoured, according to their owne deſire, they turned bitter enemies, and denounced judgements, though they formerly flattered them. *Doct.* 1. Falſe teachers are not the leaſt among the ſad companions of a declining time; nor will the Lord forget to reckon with them; for, here the Lord hath ſuch to deale with: *Thus ſaith the Lord,* (and not one Prophet envying another) *concerning the Prophets, &c.* See *Lam.* 2. 14. 2. An unfaithfull Miniſtry is a moſt effectual meanes to prevaile with people, and carry them out of the way of God; for, *the Prophets make my people erre*; ſee how farre they prevaile above any meanes, 1 *Kings* 22. 20, 21, 22. 3. As it is a great ſin againſt God,

God, to ſeduce and miſlead a people, wherein he hath intereſt; ſo the negligence and treachery of Paſtours doth indeare the Lords people ſo much the more unto him, and call for his eſpecial care; for ſo it is imported in this epithete: *They make my people erre*; See Ezek. 13. 23. 4. It is a great cruelty and murther to proclaime peace to a ſinfull and impenitent people; for, *They bite with their teeth, and cry peace*; their very crying of peace is cruel biting and devouring of ſoules, Ezek. 22. 25. 5. It is a mercenary and hireling diſpoſition in Paſtours, to ſeek themſelves or their commodity, as their chiefe and onely ſcope in their calling: for, ſo much alſo doth this challenge teach: *They bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace*; that is, they flatter the people, that ſo they may get occaſion to eat them up, and live upon them. See *Ezekiel* 13. 18, 19. or, they preached for their owne advantage, ſeeking the things of the people and not themſelves, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. 6. It is alſo unbeſeeming the faithfull Meſſengers of God, to accommodate the diſcharge of their Miniſtry, ſo as may beſt promote their owne ends, and to threaten, diſcountenance, bleſſe or curſe, according as they get or want their aimed at gaine: ſuch is the practiſe of falſe prophets, while they have to bite with their teeth, they cry, *Peace; and he that puts not into their mouths*, (or, *he that giveth not according to their mouthes*; that is, as much as they deſire or ſeek) *they even prepare war againſt him*, and turne his mortal enemy in their doctrine. 7. Men who are covetous, and given to filthy lucre, can hardly be faithfull in a Miniſterial calling, to divide the Word aright, as the example of theſe falſe Prophets teacheth, who look not to the mind of God in diſcharge of their office, but to what might beſt ſuite with their ends, and accordingly did frame their doctrine.

Ver. 6. *Therefore night* ſhall be *unto you, that yee ſhall not have a viſion; and it ſhall bee darke unto you, that ye ſhall not divine: and the Sunne ſhall goe downe over the Prophets, and the day ſhall be darke over them.*

7. *Then ſhall the Seers be aſhamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they ſhall all cover their lips, for* there is *no anſwer of God.*

The Lords ſentence againſt theſe falſe Prophets is, that they ſhall have no viſions or divinations from God; Not that ever they had any from him, but that the dark night of trouble and calamity coming on, and the Sun of their proſperity and delights going down, (as the forme of ſpeech is taken, *Jer.* 15.9.) they ſhall thereby be ſo overwhelmed and confounded, that they ſhall not dare any more to feign falſe prophecies, or pretend to revelations, as formerly they did. This is amplified, *ver.* 7, from the effects of it, that theſe who gave out themſelves for Seers and diviners, when it ſhall appear by events, that they never had any viſion from God, and that (being confounded by trouble,) they dare not ſpeak ſo boldly as they did, they ſhall be deſpiſed of all, ſhall think ſhame of themſelves, and cover their lip in ſigne of grief and confuſion; See *Lev.* 13. 45. *Doct.* 1. God wil have falſe teachers ſeen in their own colours, and will decipher them to the world; ſo doth this threaning teach. 2. Events will prove, that peace preached to a back-ſliding and impenitent people, is no viſion from God; for, the Lord threatens, that by ſending *night and darkneſſe* of trouble, contrary to their doctrine, he ſhall depoſe the falſe prophets, and make it manifeſt that they had no viſion from him: See *Jer.* 28. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. 3. Howſoever deluded and preſumptuous men may bear out in the day of their proſperyty and ſunſhine, yet trouble will confound their preſumption, and dry up their deluſion; for, when it is *night and dark, and their Sun goeth down, and their day is dark*, then *they ſhall not have a viſion, nor divine.* 4. Falſe teachers, and unfaithful men in Gods houſe, ſhall in due time be plagued with confuſion, contempt and ignominie, and be made to think ſhame of themſelves and their way; for, *then ſhall the Seers be aſhamed, and the diviners confounded*, &c. See *Zechariah* 13. 4. *Malachi* 2. 8. 9.

**Ver. 8.** *But truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the* LORD, *and of judgement, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his tranſgreſſion, and to Iſrael his ſinne.*

While *Micah* is denouncing Judgments againſt falſe prophets, in oppoſition to the unfaithfulneſſe in their callings through

through disloyalty and fear, hee sets forth himself as furnished with gifts and endowments, requisite for the faithfull discharge of his Office, though hee had few or none to second him in carrying hatd tidings, and great ones of all ranks against him; whereby as hee cleareth himself that hee was not a false prophet, so also that hee should not be confounded, not think shame of himself or of his Office, as they should do. *Doct.* 1. It is no way contrary to true humility, for a man to assert his own calling and endowments from God, when otherwise hee, and in him his message is ready to be brought into contempt by the humours of men; for, so doth *Micah*'s example teach, who vindicates himself from any contempt which false Prophets and such as affected them might cast upon him. 2. A mans clear testimony in his conscience of his calling, fidelity and furniture from God to discharge his calling, will prove comfortable, when the Lord is about to reckon with such as run without his calling; for so doth *Micah* upon the back of the threatnings against false teachers comfort himselfe: *But truly* (there is the certainty of his testimony) *I am full of power, &c.* 3. Albeit *Micah* had some qualifications extraordinary, yet from this we may gather several characters of a faithful Minister, every one whereof is a lesson, teaching Ministers what to seeke after: As, 1. However the Lord may blesse the meane gifts of such as are honest, yet neither are Ministers to be empty vessels, nor swelled with ostentation, but a large measure of real furniture is to be sought after; *I am full*, saith he. 2. Their endowments must be not only such as are acquired by the use of ordinary means and helps of literature, much lesse ought their owne spirits or humours to bear sway here; but they should seek the Spirit of the Lord to sanctifie their spirits and abilities, and furnish them in their dependence on him; for, saith he, *I am full by the Spirit of the Lord*, which he had extraordinarily as a Prophet, and Ministers ought to have in an ordinary way: They ought, I say, to have not only the Spirit of their calling, but the Spirit of sanctification also, as their duty, and for their own soules good: though otherwise a man may be a true Minister, and may be an instrument of true good to others, who yet is not regenerate himself. 3. As Ministers need not only furniture of matter, but such life and zeale in publishing the Word, as becomes the Oracles of God; so where the Spirit of the Lord is the furnisher, there will be efficacie, life and

zeale accompanying the doctrine; for, *I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord*, ſaith he. 4. A faithfull Miniſter ought alſo to be endowed, not onely with ſufficient knowledge to ſpeake according to the Word, and not falſifie the minde of God through ignorance, and with prudence to ſpeak it ſeaſonably; but with fidelity and ſtreigtneſſe in telling the minde of God according to equity and truth, without partiality or regard to one or other; for, ſo much doth the word *judgement* import. 5. Miniſters alſo ſtand in need of fortitude and courage, to ſpeake out boldly what is the minde of God, and conſtantly adhere to it, without feare of any, or being blown over with the winde of flattery; and this a faithfull Miniſter muſt and ought to expect from God onely: *I am full of might by the Spirit of the* LORD. 6. A faithfull Miniſter lookes on all his endowments, as not given to be layd up and contract reſt beſide him, or for himſelfe onely; but that hee ought to improve them for God and his people, in his place and ſtation: *I am full*, ſaith he, *to declare unto Iacob, &c.* and empty out that goodneſſe for their good and behoofe. 7. It is an evidence of a faithfull and able Miniſter to be much in oppoſition to ſin, and freely to charge it home, and *declare tranſgreſſion and ſin* to the ſinner: and not be deceived or blinded with fair titles or ſhews, but to diſcern and reprove ſin even in *Iudah and Iſrael*.

**Ver. 9.** *Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the houſe of Iacob, and Princes of the houſe of Iſrael, that abhor judgement, and pervert all equity.*

10. *They build up Zion with blood, and Ieruſalem with iniquity.*

11. *The heads thereof judge for reward, and the Prieſts thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they leane upon the* LORD, *and ſay, Is not the* LORD *among us? none evill can come upon us.*

In the ſecond part of the Chapter, *Micah* gives a proofe of what he hath ſaid of his owne fidelity in ſpeaking to all ſorts of rulers, Civil and Eccleſiaſtick, Ordinary and Extraordinary, con-

conjunctly; ſeetting before them their ſinne; and how they procured *Zions* ruine: he accuſeth the Rulers in State that they who ought to have beene patrons of Juſtice, did abhorre and pervert it, *ver.* 9. that in ſtead of adorning the holy city with juſtice and judgement, their care was ſet upon ſtately buildings, and they gathered means for that end by cruel oppreſſion. *ver.* 10. And generally he accuſeth all of them, that juſtice was perverted through briberie and covetouſneſſe, and that their Churchmen were mercenary, and made their calling of ordinary teaching and extraordinary divining, ſubſervient to their gain: and yet all of them were carnally confident and preſumptuous of Gods favour and preſence among them, and of exemptions from judgments *ver.* 11. *Doct.* 1. Perſons in eminency, eſpecially being accuſtomed to ſinne, are uſually deafe to what the Lord ſaith, and therefore muſt be often called to *heare*, as here they are after that former call, *verſ.* 1. 2. The meſſengers of the Lord muſt not give over, when their meſſage is not received, but muſt cry till either they get audience, or have delivered their ſoules; for *Micah* repeats, *Heare I pray you.* 3. It is the duty of faithful Miniſters in reproving the faults of Rulers, to give evidence they doe not condemne their Authority, when they reprove their faults; and not to be wanting in any reſpective carriage which is due unto them; therefore doth *Micah* give them their titles, and againe intreat; *Heare I pray you, yee heads of the houſe of* Jacob, *and Princes of the houſe of* Iſrael. Where the Princes of *Judah* to whom this was ſpoken, *Jer.* 26.18. are called Rulers in Jacob and Iſrael, not only becauſe the houſe of *David* had ſtill a right to governe all *Iſrael* (and therefore ſuch a title ſeemeth to be given to *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 *Chron.* 2.2.) or becauſe their carriage was more like *Iſrael* then *Judah*, (and therefore it is given to *Ahaz*. 2 *Chron.* 28.12.) Gr. becauſe there was no more left of all *Jacobs* race after the Captivity of the ten tribes (which was in *Hezekiah*'s dayes) but only *Judah* to governe; but becauſe they were Rulers of a people that came of the ſtock of *Jacob*, otherwiſe called *Iſrael*. 4. The Lords quarrel againſt men is not ſo much for ſinnes of ignorance and infirmity, as for ſuch as flowe from a perverſe diſpoſition, going wrong, becauſe they love to doe ſo, and do hate what is right; therefore are they againe challenged; that they *abhorre judgment, and ſo pervert all equity.* 5. The Lord will admit of no faire precences to palliate any ſinful deed; for

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it is no excuſe that they build *Zion*, if it be done by blood and iniquity, or with goods taken by bloody oppreſſion from the poor; but on the contrary, as it is incident to all pretences, that they prove ſnow-water, and defile that the more which they endeavour to cleanſe: ſo it is the matter of a ſadder quarrel, that they ſhould build the holy City by ſuch meanes; *They build up Zion with blood, and Jeruſalem with iniquity.* 6. Thoſe are unſurely built houſes and eſtates, at the way of raiſing whereof, and gathering means for that end God is angry: for, it is a quarrel againſt them, and the houſe which they *build with blood and iniquity.* See *Hab.* 2.12. 7. Howſoever the Lord allow lawful maintenance to ſuch as are publickly employed in Church and State, yet to receive hire or gifts ſo as to judge partially, becauſe of the gifts received, is groſſe iniquity; for, it is a quarrel here: *The heads thereof judg for reward, &c.* See *Exod.*18.21. 8. When bribes are received by men in office, either in Church or State, it is an evidence they will not do their duty faithfully and in ſingleneſſe; for, *judging for reward, teaching for hire, and divining for money*, is all one with falſe judgment, and erroneous teaching, and divination; for, true is he who ſaid, *A gift blindeth the wiſe, &c. Exod.*23.8. 9. Preſumption will feed up men with deluſion under very groſſe ſins, and when a ſtroak is near; for, *Yet will they lean on the Lord, &c.* 10. External priviledges of the Church, and external reformation of Worſhip, are ordinarily turned by ſecure ſinners into a ſnare or plague to themſelves, making them dream of Gods favour, and of peace, when wrath is upon them, and trouble at hand. Such a ſnare was Gods preſence in his Temple, and *Hezekiah*'s reformation to theſe profane rulers, *Is not the Lord among us? &c.* 11. External priviledges will not exempt prophane ſinners from deſerved judgement, nor will external reformation hold it off, but rather ripen the faſter for it; for it was their preſumption even under reforming *Hezekiah*, to ſay, *Is not the Lord among us? no evil can come upon us*; ſo long as they had not repented indeed, as it is, *Jer.*26.18,19. 12. God will approve of no faith but ſuch as is fruitful, and ſtirs up men to purifie and cleanſe their heart and way; for, they are here challenged, that when they have done all the former iniquities, and are going on in them, *Yet they will lean upon the Lord*, or pretend to true faith, whereby a man caſts himſelf and all his burdens on God; *and ſay, Is not the Lord among us?*

Ver. 12.

Ver. 12. *Therefore ſhall Zion for your ſake be plowed as a field; and Jeruſalem ſhal become heaps, and the mountain of the houſe as the high places of the forreſt.*

Followeth the Lords ſentence ſubjoyned to this accuſation: He threatens that for their ſinnes the ſtately buildings of the holy City ſhould be made deſolate heaps; and the ground it was ſituate upon, eſpecially the Kingly dwelling, ſhould become arable and to be plowed as a common field; and that the mountain *Moriah*, whereon the Temple ſtood, ſhould become wilde and diſhaunted as a forreſt, and filled with ſhrubs and buſhes. See *Chap.* 1. 6. *Doct.* 1. No place or viſible Church hath any ſuch priviledge, but that ſinne will make it deſolate: for, no place hath ſuch promiſes as *Zion*, *Jeruſalem*, *and the mountain of the houſe* had, and yet they were to be *plowed as a field*, *&c.* 2. The ſervants of God muſt be bold and faithful, not onely in ſpeaking againſt the ſins of the Rulers, but even againſt a Church having great priviledges, when ſhe is found in tranſgreſſion: for, this paſſage is recorded as a proof of *Micah*'s fidelity, *Jer.* 26. 18. 3. It is our duty to look upon ſin, and to be affected with it, not only as procuring corrections upon our ſelves; but eſpecially as it hath an hand in drawing on calamities on the Church and Kingdom where we live; this he tells them: *For your ſake* Zion *ſhal be plowed as a field, and Jeruſalem ſhal become heaps, and the mountaine of the houſe as the high places of the forreſt.* 4 Univerſal defection of a Land, eſpecially of Rulers and Teachers in their Offices and Judicatories, will bring on ſpeedy deſolation, unleſſe that by repentance it be prevented, (as the execution of this threatning was in *Hezekiahs* dayes, *Jer.* 26. 18, 19.) *For your ſakes* Zion *ſhal be plowed*, *&c.* ſaith he to the corrupt Rulers and Teachers, in regard their corruption had a chief hand in procuring this ruine, and could not but involve the people in the like defection, to haſten the judgement. 5. Judgments on a backſliding Church are moſt ſevere and ſharp, howſoever there be moderation in them to the Elect; for, no leſſe is here threatned then being *plowed as a field*, *becoming heaps, and as the high places of the forreſt*; So great a ſin is the contempt of mercy offered to a Church. 6. As for this

part

part of their calamity, that the ground whereon the holy City and Temple ſtood *was plowed as a field*, albeit when it was firſt denounced in *Hezekiahs* dayes, it was ſuſpended on their repentance, *Jer.*26.19. And albeit we find not that it was accompliſhed at the firſt deſtruction of the Temple; yet common hiſtory informs us, that after the ſecond deſtruction thereof, it was performed by the Romanes; who, according to their cuſtome, plowed up the very ground whereon the Temple had ſtood, in ſign of perpetual deſolation. So infallibly certain is the Word of God, that after ſo long a tract of time it will take effect; albeit upon repentance it had been delayed; yea, and after they had paſt through many troubles, and had been delivered, and ſo might think they had done with it, yet upon new ſin and provocation that ſentence is ſtill ſtanding againſt them, and at laſt takes effect.

## CHAP. IV.

IN this Chapter (which agrees with *Iſai.*2 1, *&c.*) the Lord comforts the godly againſt the calamities which were foretold, *Chap.*3.12. by ſetting forth the glorious bleſſings of Chriſts Kingdome, or of the Church of Jewes and Gentiles under the Meſſiah, wherein is contained the glorious excellency and increaſe of the Church, *v.*1,2. her peace and tranquillity under the government of Chriſt, *ver.* 3,4. her zeal and conſtancy in Religion, *ver.* 5. and her delivery from former miſery, ſuch as *Iſrael* was to be under, *ver.*6, 7. To whom (which is the ſecond part of the Chapter) he makes a more comfortable and particular application of the Promiſes; by promiſing that the Kingdom as it was of old, ſhould begin at them, *ver.*8, and by ſhewing his mind concerning their troubles, *ver.* 9,10. and concerning the enterpriſes of their enemies, *ver.*11, 12,13.

Ver.1. BUt *in the laſt dayes it ſhall come to paſſe*, that *the mountaine of the houſe of*

*of the* LORD *shall be established in the the top of the mountaines, and it shall be exalted above the hils, and people shal flow unto it.*

2 *And many Nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the* LORD, *and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his wayes, and we will walk in his pathes: for the Law shal go forth out of Zion, and the Word of the* LORD *from Jerusalem.*

The first Promise for comfort of the godly, contains the excellency of the Church, and accession of many Nations to it: It hath two branches.

First, That however the Church of the Jewes was to be in great misery for sin; yet it should come to passe in the dayes of the Messiah that the Church (called by the name of old *Zion*, or the *mountain of the house*, as best known to the Jewes) and the Church of *Israel* as eminent and chief among the rest, should be glorious and exalted above every society that is excellent in the world; as if the mountaine whereon the Temple stood, were made higher then any hill, or set upon the top of them: *Whence learn*, 1. As the Spirit of God is a Spirit of unity and doth not differ from himself in his manifestations to his servants; so it is a comfortable thing when the Messengers of God do concur and unite in bearing testimony to any Truth in the Church; for thus it was with *Isaiah* and *Micah*, who being contemporary, do preach the same things here; and *Is.* 2. 2. God doth no sooner afflict his people, but as soon mercies, to make up their losses come in his mind; and the Churches afflictions are never to be studied, but when the promises making her up are taken along in our thoughts; for, immediately upon the back of that threatning, *Chap.* 3. 12. this promise cometh forth, as testifying his affection, and for her to look upon with the other. 3. The Churches happinesse and felicity is much in gracious promises, and to come in respect of performance: *It shall come to passe*, saith the Lord: This was indeed especially true under the Law, in comparison of the days of the Gospel; and yet even under the Kingdome of Christ her feli-

felicity is yet to be compleated when eternity ſhall come; and ſhee is to live on hope of that. 4. The chiefe and great glory of the Church within time was reſerved for the dayes of the Goſpel, and of the manifeſtation of Chriſt in the fleſh: The Church before, (however knowing and enjoying the *Meſſiah* by faith, yet) being kept under a pædagogie of the Ceremonial law, and the ſhadowes of good things to come: *In the laſt dayes it ſhall come to paſſe, &c.* See *Luke* 10. 23, 24. *Heb.* 11.40. 1 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11, 12. 5. The dayes of the Goſpel are the laſt dayes, wherein all things foretold by the Prophets being accompliſhed, we are daily to be expecting eternity, and the cloſure of time; for ſo is the time betwixt the firſt and ſecond coming of Chriſt called the *laſt dayes*, or evening of the world. See 1 *Cor.* 10.11. 6. The true Church of Chriſt is firme and impregnable, and elevated above the world; for ſo much doth this name *of the mountaine of the houſe eſtabliſhed* teach us: A mountaine denotates what is ſtrong and fixed, and what is elevated above other things. 7. The Church of Chriſt, however in outward appearance baſe (as the little hill *Moriah* on which the Temple ſtood) yet ſhall be, and is truly excellent and glorious above all worldly eſtates and kingdomes, and above all Idols and Idol-ſervices; for, *the mountaine of the houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed on the top of the mountaines, and exalted above the hills*, that is, above potentates (which are compared to mountaines, *Jerem.* 51. 25.) above Idols which are worſhipped on hills or high places; and generally, above all that is eminent in the world: This is accompliſhed, partly when the Church is made to riſe upon the ruines of kingdomes and Idols which oppoſe her, *Iſai.* 60. 12. partly when Kings bring their glory to her, *Iſ.* 60.10, 11. (which is yet more to be fulfilled when Antichriſt ſhall fall, and all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved,) their eminencies are but as hills to ſet her up higher: But chiefly this is daily accompliſhed in reſpect of Gods preſence in her, *Pſ.* 68.15, 16. 8. The excellency and glory which God puts upon his Church, is not a tranſient or vaniſhing thing; but however ſhe may be toſſed, and duſt caſt upon her, yet her excellency will remaine; for, ſhe is not onely *exalted*, but *eſtabliſhed* in this eminency.

The ſecond branch of this promiſe, is the increaſe and ſpreading of the Church (which is both an effect, and an inſtance of her ſpiritual glory and eminency) in that people of all Nations (as

(as it is *Iſai.* 2. 2.) ſhall (not go up to earthly *Jeruſalem*, but) embrace the Goſpel, and joyne themſelves unto the true Church, whoſe fervour in coming is held forth in their mutual incouragements, and upſtirrings to come unto the Church, for direction how to order their converſation; all which as it hath already been verified, ſo it will be yet more accompliſhed, when the fulneſſe of the Gentiles being converted ſhall profeſſe their communion in the Chriſtian Religion with converted *Iſrael*, and ſhall receive from them a perfect directory for Gods ſervice, and joyn in faith and worſhip with them, when God ſhall remember his Covenant, and prove himſelfe to be *the God of Jacob*. *Doct.* 1 It is the glory of the Kingdome of Chriſt, that it is univerſal, and that he ſhall prevaile with thoſe who were enemies thereunto, to become ſubjects, and acknowledge the Church to be the Princeſſe of ſocieties, and ſhall perſwade even whole Nations under the Goſpel to become a Church to him, and a part of his kingdome; for, *people ſhal flow unto it, and many Nations ſhal come*. The Church ſhall not be confined within the bounds of *Judea* or of one Nation only; nor ſhal the party of a Nation only, but the whole Nation joyne. 2. Under the Goſpel the diſtinction and prerogatives of Nations are taken away, all have acceſſe unto the Church, and ſome of all ſorts wil come; for, *people and many Nations ſhall flow and come*, as well as the Jewes. See *Col.* 3. 11. 3. The glory and priviledges of the Church of Chriſt, being wel ſeen, would make people not only come, but flow with zeal and fervour, and in great number to him, in her: for ſo much doth the word *flowing* teach us, that they ſhal flow as abundantly, and with as much fervour as rivers run downward. See *Jer.* 31. 12. yea, a ſight of this would make Kings deſire to partake of the portion of Chriſts poor, *Pſal.* 72. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. 4. In a time of converſion, eſpecially of Nations to the Goſpel, and to Chriſt, there will be a willing and chearful people; for, ſo is it here, *many Nations ſhall come, and ſay, Come, &c.* See *Pſal.* 110. 3. 5. Our willingneſs to come unto Chriſt in his Church, ought to be evidenced by ſtirring up one another to come to him; for, *they ſhall ſay, Come, and let us go, &c.* 6 A converted people do yet ſtand in much need of mutual edification and ſtirring up of one another in their ſtations; for, ſo doth the practice of theſe converts teach us, *Come, let us go up*, ſay they. 7. True mutual edification conſiſts not in mutual exhor-

exhortations only, but eſpecially in practice, and walking ſo as may edifie and excite others; *Come, and let us go*; they are going themſelves, who can rightly exhort others. See *Zech.* 8.21. 8. True converts muſt be drawn upward in their aime, affections and practice from the earth; and albeit there be ſeeds of good and willingneſſe in them, yet they will finde the way of godlineſs a ſtrait and ſteep path to their nature; Therefore their courſe gets the name of *going up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the houſe of the God of Jacob*, alluding to their aſcending to the Temple. 9. Such as draw neer unto God, and joyne themſelves to him in his Church, ought to lay hold upon the Covenant, wherin he hath ingaged himſelf to be gracious in his Chriſt to all who ſeek to him; for, *they go up to the houſe of the God of Jacob*; that is, he who hath entered in a Covenant with *Jacobs* poſterity, and with the *Iſrael* in the ſpirit. 10. That which is moſt eminent in a true convert, and which is firſt gained in one whoſe heart is touched, is their affectionate willingneſs to obey God: *We will walk in his paths* ſay they, their affection is gained, when yet they are to get teaching. See *Rom.* 7.22. 11. Affection toward God is not ſufficient for a peoples walking, to render their way approved, but they muſt have knowledge of the will of God alſo, to direct their path; for, *He will teach, and we will walk*, ſay they. 12. Every true convert is made ſenſible of his natural ignorance and proneneſs to errour, and becomes docible and willing to receive inſtruction: *Let us go* (ſay they) *and he will teach us of his wayes*; they account it a mercy to be taught; and that not what they like, or as they effect, but what is his will. 13. Albeit the Lord hath appointed a teaching Miniſtry in his Church, which his people ought and will acknowledge, yet every true convert is taught of God: partly, while they hang not their faith on mens authority, but exalt God alone to be the infallible Teacher and Law-giver in his Church, and do try if what men ſay, be agreeable to his mind; and partly, while they feele God in and by his appointed means, teaching truth effectually and perſwaſively to their hearts; *He will teach us of his wayes*, ſay they. See *John* 4 42. 1 *Theſ.* 1.13. 14 As all knowledge of divine things ought not to reſt in contemplations, but ſtirre up to practice; ſo however men of much literal knowledge may be more prophane in their converſations then others; yet ſuch as are taught of God, and ac-

acknowledg his Authority in the meanes of inſtruction, and feel the efficacy of his Spirit conveighing what is taught to their hearts, their knowledg will reſolve in practice: it being the Lords prerogative, to convince the conſcience, and ſubdue and ſtir up inclinations to practiſe what is taught: *He will teach us, and we wil walk in his paths.*

Unto this promiſe the Prophet ſubjoynes a reaſon, why Nations ſhould ſeek to joyn with the Church; to wit, becauſe the doctrine of ſalvation ſhould go forth from the Jews, among all Nations, to ſtir them up to ſeek the Lord, and this light ſhall ſhine forth in the Church in all ages to invite Nations to come and ſeek teaching. *Doct.* 1. The glory of the Church of the New Teſtament conſiſts not in idle ceremonies, but in the profeſſion and holding forth of true doctrine according to the Word, which is the badge and mark of the true Church: for, *the Law* (or, generally the true *doctrine*, as the word in the Original bears) *ſhall go forth out of* Zion, *and the Word of the Lord from Jeruſalem*, that it may ſhine in all the Churches of the Gentiles, and this is a part of the eminency of the mountain of the Lords houſe. 2. The Lord hath made it clear, that the Doctrine of ſalvation in the days of the Meſſiah, was not to be treaſured up among the Jewes only as of old, *Pſal.* 147.19. but to ſpread throughout the world; for, *the Law ſhall go forth of* Zion, *&c.* 3 The Doctrine of the Goſpel is the ſame for ſubſtance with what was in the Church of the Jewes, though clothed with new circumſtantials. Therefore it is called a *Law*, alluding to the old name, and cometh from among them to us, though not from *Sinai*, cloathed with dark ſhadowes and fearful terrours; but from *Zion*, adorned with cleerneſſe, and ſeaſoned with ſweetneſſe. 4. As the Word of God publiſhed in his Church is the inſtrument of true converſion: ſo it is the meanes whereby Chriſt inlargeth his Kingdome, and will prevail in the world to perſwade Nations to joyne themſelves to him in his Church; therefore is this given as a reaſon of the inlargement of the Church, and activity of Converts; *for the Law ſhall go forth of* Zion, *&c.*

Ver. 3. *And he ſhall judge among many people, and rebuke ſtrong Nations afar off, and they ſhal beat their ſwords into plowſhares, and their ſpears into pru-*

*ning hook: Nation shall not lift up a sword against Nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

4 *But they shall sit every man under his Vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make* them *afraid; for the mouth of the* LORD *of hosts hath spoken* it.

The next promise contains her peace and tranquillity (setting out yet more the Churches glory) under Christs government; that God in his Son Christ shall by his Gospel have and exercise a spiritual jurisdiction and kingdome in the world, whereby he shall subdue them to his obedience, and having subdued, shall govern them so, as to procure peace and tranquillity to the Church, that the converted may serve God quietly in their particular stations, and become useful each to other. This their condition is expressed in termes taken from the usual practice of peaceable times, wherein men being out of use of war, do turne their weapons of offence into instruments of husbandry and utility, and wherein men go about those callings and abide abroad in the fields without fear of danger, as 1 *King.* 4. 25. *Doct.* 1. Christ coming with his Gospel, is to reigne as a King, and have authority over those who receive him; for, *he shall judge among many people.* 2. It is a truth to be much and frequently studied, that Christs Kingdome is universal, his Church spread over the world, and he having power over all for her good; that he may have his glory, and every particular Church and believer be comforted in such a head, and in hope of the enlargement of his dominion, when by Apostasie or persecution it is confined to narrow bounds; therefore is it again promised, that *he shal judge among many people, and rebuke strong Nations afar off*; to wit, far from *Judea*, and meaning all people far and neer. 3. The Lord may deal very terribly with such as he purposeth to do much good unto; he may convince, rebuke, and afflict them for sin, that he may drive them to his mercy; for that is a part of his work in gathering a Kingdom, *to judge and rebuke.* 4. Albeit the Lord in gathering of his Church, do not make use of weapons of war, but only his Word with the reproofs and terrors thereof, yet that will

will ſuffice to ſubdue them to him, nothing in the creature being able to ſtand out againſt the Lord, convincing and rebuking for ſin; for, if he *judge and rebuke many people and ſtrong Nations*, they will feel it, and *beat their ſwords into plowſhares, &c.* and come under his government. 5. This promiſe of great tranquillity and peace, is not ſo to be underſtood as if the Lord did condemn Chriſtians their undertaking of lawful wars; for, Magiſtrates bearing the ſword of Juſtice (which muſt oft-times be executed by force of armes) is the Ordinance of God, *Rom.* 13. Nor are we ſo to underſtand it, as if the Church were alwayes to enjoy outward peace and tranquillity; for, Chriſt refuſes that himſelf, *Matth.* 10.34. Nor doth the godlies ſpirituall peace in all troubles exhauſt the full ſcope of this promiſe. But the ſcope is to teach us, 1. The ſaving effect of the Goſpel upon men, is, when it daunts and ſubdues their corruptions, and ſo makes them, as tractable and plyable to the will of God; ſo, peaceably ſtudy to ſerve God in their ſtations, and to be uſeful each to other; for, when theſe ſtrong Nations are rebuked, *they beat their ſwords into plowſhares, &c.* Which are inſtruments of their lawful calling, and of utility to themſelves and others. 2. This taming of mens corruptions by the Goſpel, will appear farther, in that the Saints and converted will live at peace, in ſo far as they are renewed (otherwiſe a Saints corruption as well as our own, may be on our tops,) and that there ſhall not be ſuch an enmity betwixt believing Jewes and Gentiles, as was before the partition was taken down; in theſe reſpects, *Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.* 3. Whatever troubles the Church may meet with from enemies, yet ſhe ſhall give no cauſe nor occaſion thereof, albeit their corruption may take occaſion to raiſe troubles becauſe of the profeſſion of the Goſpel; for, the converted ſhall be peaceable men, *and beat their ſwords into plowſhares, &c.* 4. In deſpite of all the power and imaginations of enemies, the Church of God ſhall have even outward peace and tranquillity in ſo far as is needful and ſubſervient to their ſpiritual good, otherwiſe when it proves hurtful, it is better to want it, as the Church hath many times found in experience. And as the Lord hath often given taſtes of this to his Church: ſo it will be more fully accompliſhed when the fulneſs of the Gentiles and all *Iſrael* ſhall be turned to the Lord, as ſometimes before in the Church; ſo, then *they ſhall ſit every man under his*

*vine, and under his fig-tree, and none ſhall make them afraid.*
*Doc.6.* The fidelity of God who promiſeth, is ſufficient to aſſure our hearts of the performance of greateſt things, as being omnipotent, and having all things under his power, and at his command, which may either promote or ſeem to impede the execution of his will: Therefore is this promiſe, which might ſeem improbable by reaſon of the great deſolation which was threatned ſhould come, ſealed with this: *for the mouth of the Lord of hoſts hath ſpoken it.*

Ver. 5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.*

In the Parallel place, *Iſai.* 2. 5. inſtead of what is here; is contained an exhortation to the Jewes, that ſince the Church under the Meſſiah was to be glorious, they would faithfully cleave to God and true Religion in all their calamities, till theſe dayes ſhould come; and ſeeing the Gentiles were thus to flow in to Chriſt, they would not ſlip away, but be provoked to jealouſie, and come in to partake. And indeed the hope of the Church of God is ſo great and ſure, that it may well encourage men to be honeſt under any diſadvantage: and albeit this exhortation was not hearkened unto at the firſt Converſion of the Gentiles, yet the day will come, when it ſhall be effectually upon them, *Rom.*11.11.25,26. But *Micah* ſeems to hold forth further the reſolution of the Converts of Jewes and Gentiles under the Goſpel, to renounce all hereſies and ſects, and to adhere conſtantly and zealouſly to God, and the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, exciting themſelves hereunto by the example of idolaters, who were pertinacious in their irreligious courſes: and this is a third evidence of the glory of the Church: and ground of encouragement to the godly, that in ſtead of the manifold Apoſtaſies and pollutions with the wayes of the Pagans, which appeared formerly in the Church of the Jewes, the Church of God, eſpecially *Iſrael* being converted, ſhould then prove conſtant in their Religion. *Doc.* 1. Conſtancy in adhering to the true Religion, is the great glory of a Church, and encouragement of the godly, to whom backſlidings are a ſad affliction, as here we are taught. 2. The Chriſtian Profeſ-

ſion

ſion and Religion conſiſts in *walking in the Name of the Lord*, that is, in profeſſing and practiſing according to the revealed rule, which is *his Name*; not ſeeking to be wiſe above what is written, and going about theſe things in his ſtrength, as 1 *Sam.* 17.45. *Pſalm* 118.11. being furniſhed with encouragement from him; for, ſo *his Name* in *Iſa.* 2.5. is the light (to wit, of direction and conſolation) of the Lord. 3. Such as would walk in theſe pathes, and adhere to them, ought to make ſure an intereſt in God by Covenant, and make uſe of this intereſt for daily influence, and ought to be filled with much affection toward their Confederate Lord; *Wee will walk in the Name of the Lord our God.* 4. For right performance of our duty, there is much need alſo of frequently renewed reſolutions, and gathered together motives to ſet us on edge; as here they gather arguments from idol-ſervers, and put on reſolutions; *Wee will walk &c.* 5. Eternall reſolutions, or reſolutions of perſevering conſtantly, are fit and beſeeming ſo high a duty as walking in Gods Name; *we wil walk*, ſay they, and *walk for ever and ever.* It being a way wherein there is no cauſe of wearying, and the benefit thereof being but in its prime, and fully to appear, when time and its contentments are ending. 6. Even in the dayes of the Goſpel, there are ſtill ſo many blindfolded and deluded, as not to ſee the glory of Chriſts Kingdome, but will pertinaciouſly follow their Idol-gods: for, there are, *all people* (that is, many who) *will walk in the name of their god.* 7. The Lords people ought (and by grace will) be ſo far from being ſhaken or drawn away by the multitude of men who forſake their true God, that idolaters their obſervancy and exactneſſe in their way ſhould give occaſion to the ſeekers of God to put on reſolutions of more exactneſſe; their blinde zeal toward that which is no God, may teach us our duty toward the true God; for ſo doth this compariſon inſtituted teach, that not onely Chriſtians would not joyne with them in their way, but ſeeking theſe were ſo carefull and reſolute, much more ought they to be ſo in the right way; *For al people wil walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* See *Ier.* 2.10,11.

Ver.6. *In that day, ſaith the LORD, will I aſſemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is*

*driven out, and her that I have afflicted.*

7. *And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was caſt farre off a ſtrong nation: and the* LORD *ſhall reigne over them in mount Zion, from henceforth even for ever.*

The fourth encouragement doth yet further evidence the glory of the Church, from the conſideration of her former miſery by affliction for ſin, which he would now make up, and of ſuch conſtitute his Church, and Kingdome, over which he ſhould reigne for ever and ever. And however this promiſe be of generall verity, pointing out what baſe and contemptible like matter he will gather his Church of, yet it hath a ſpeciall relation to the preſently afflicted, and yet further to be afflicted Church of *Iſrael*, whom he comforts againſt all her afflictions and impediments that might cut off all hope of her reſtauration, by promiſing to gather them under the Goſpel, and make them a great Nation, and that Chriſt in his ſpiritual government ſhall conſtantly rule over them in their own land, after their converſion, or in the Church which was prefigured by *Mount Zion*. *Doct.* 1. The Lords afflicting of his Church doth in a ſpecial manner, endear her to his affection, and makes that ſhe ſhall not be behind, when mercies are a dealing; for, ſaith he, *I wil aſſemble and gather her that I have afflicted*: See *Jer.* 31.20. 2. Great afflictions are no impediments to the Churches reſtitution, when the time of it comes, when Omnipotency is imployed about it, and when he in love remembers them in their low eſtate; for, ſuch as are ſo cruſhed with trouble, as they are made *to halt*, ſuch as are *afflicted, driven out and caſt farre off*, he can and will *aſſemble and gather them, and make a remnant and ſtrong nation of them*; that is, he wil preſerve a remnant and keepe them from total ruine in trouble, and at laſt reſtore and multiply them. 3. The glory of a Church reſtored, and the height of their felicity, is to have the Lord reigning and acknowledged as a King in all his prerogatives amongſt them; therefore it is added to their reſtitution, *And the Lord ſhall reigne over them in Mount Zion*. 4. The Churches King is not ſubject to mortality, nor ſuch a one as may be put from his kingdom, and leave them expoſed to hazard; but, *the Lord ſhal reigne over them* (and

ſo

ſo protect them) *from henceforth even for ever*: which alſo imports that he will ſtill have ſubjects to reigne over.

**Ver.8.** *And thou, O tower of the flock, the ſtrong hold of the daughter of Zion: unto thee ſhall it come, even the firſt dominion: that kingdome ſhal come to the daughter of Jeruſalem.*

Here the Lord makes a more particular application of his comfortable promiſes unto the Church of the *Jewes*; for however the Promiſe be of general verity in a ſpiritual ſenſe, being applied to the Catholick Church, that *Jeruſalem* which is from above; yet the following verſes cleare, that it is to be underſtood ſpecially of the Church of the *Jewes*, whom he here cals the *tower of the flock*, or *Eder*, of which *Gen.*35.21. conceived to be a place neere, or in *Ieruſalem*, and in particular that part which was after called the *ſheep-gate*; *and the ſtrong hold of the daughter of Zion*, or *Ophel*, of which, 2 *Chron.*27.3, *Neh.*3 26. The firſt encouragement given to them for the comfort of the godly, is; that not only the Kingdome of Chriſt ſhould firſt begin at them, as the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament doth evidence; but that under Chriſt they ſhould be reſtored to their wonted dignity, reſembling that which they had of old enjoyed under *David* and *Solomon*, before their rents and calamities. *Doct.* 1. The Lord in gathering the univerſal Church hath an eſpecial regard to the *Jewes* his brethren; this doth appear in the ſpeciall allowance given to them in the promiſes concerning the Kingdome of Chriſt; of which, as the Lord gave them the firſt offer, ſo from them the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. gathers, that much mercy, ſhall yet be manifeſted unto them. 2. The Church of God is the receptacle and fold of all his true ſheep, wherein they gather themſelves under his government, and are environed with ſtrength for ſafety; ſo much is ſignified to us by theſe names given to *Zion*, *The Tower of the flock and ſtrong hold*. 3. The Lords own Application of ſpiritual comforts, is eſpecially requiſite for his afflicted people; therefore the Lord counts it not enough to have propounded ample promiſes in general to the Church, which might anſwer all their caſes, and which they were bound to be applying; but he holds it alſo neceſſary to apply theſe

to the preſent Church in her need. 4. The glory of Chriſts Kingdome is as great and greater ſpiritually, then ever the glory of *David* or *Solomons* reigne was outwardly; all the valour, ſtrength and victories of *David*, all the riches, honour, and wiſdom of *Solomon*, even to admiration, and all the felicity of Iſrael under both, are but ſhadowes of that ſubſtance; therefore is it called *the firſt dominion*, that is, not ſo much the dominion at firſt offered to the *Jewes*, as a dominion like the firſt flouriſhing times of Iſrael, 5. As Chriſt, to fulfil the truth of God, did make firſt offer of his Kingdome and Goſpel to the *Iewes*; ſo in due time he wil bring them under his dominion and ſpiritual Government; and will reſtore them to their wonted dignity thereby; uniting all Iſrael in him, the ſeede of *David*, as they were before the rent made by *Ieroboam*; adorning them eminently with the ſpirituall excellencies and priviledges of his Kingdome; if not alſo appearing glorioufly for them in outward things: for, ſaith he, *Unto thee ſhal the firſt dominion come. the kingdome ſhal come to the daughter of Ieruſalem.*

**Ver. 9.** *Now why doſt thou cry out aloud? is there no King in thee? is thy Counſeller periſhed? for pangs hath taken thee as a woman in travel.*

10. *Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travel; for now ſhalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou ſhalt dwel in the field, and thou ſhalt go even to Babylon; there ſhalt thou be delivered: there the LORD ſhall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.*

The next encouragement given to the Church of the *Iewes*, is by ſhewing his mind concerning her troubles that were ſhortly to enſue; and that he may the more effectually comfort her, he very pathetically propounds her trouble, as if ſhe were now under it, and ſhewes unto her, that however in outward appearance ſhe had cauſe of bitter ſorrow, her King and Counſellers being to periſh in that calamity, ſhe being to be driven from the City and Temple which were to be deſtroyed, to ſojourn a ſpace in the fields, till the reſt of the Captivity were gathered, and then

to

to be carried captive unto *Babylon*; yet upon better consideration, she might finde shee had no such cause of fainting, but ought rather resolutely to provide for, and couragiously to bear that trouble, seeing God should be King and Counseller to her, and in *Babylon*, where she might have least hope, she should find deliverance; and so he clears his mind to be this, that by trouble she is going on toward deliverance. *Doct.* 1. The troubles of the Church may in their houre, prove very sharp and bitter, as *the pangs of a woman in travel, crying out aloud.* 2. Albeit the Church of God in her trouble seeme to have reason for excessive sorrow, and bitter discouragement, yet really it is not so, but she hath still some reason of encouragement, and ought to set about it; therefore whatever her troubles were, yet saith he, *why dost thou cry out aloud?* as if he had said, there is no reason for such excesse in anxiety and sorrow. The reasons of this principal doctrine held forth in the Text, are as so many doctrines, all of them concluding that she ought not to give way to discouragement. 1. There is nothing the people of God want in trouble, which might be helpful or comfortable to them, but it wil be made up in God; for however her King and Counsellers were useless, and enemies to her safetie in that strait, and were afterward cut off for their sins, and that she might be emptied of all created comfort and helps, yet the Lord wil not admit that she should think she wanted a King, while as he lived and reigned to preserve her in her trouble, and in due time to re-establish his Kingdom in her; so much doth this sharp question teach, *Is there no King in thee? Is thy Counseller perished?* 2. As the Lord seeth it oft times fit not to remove, but continue and increase a peoples trouble; (for they were to *be in pain, to go out of the city, dwel in the field, and go to Babylon*:) so the people of God in such cases ought to arme themselves with resolution for such lots, rather then by discouragement to make their owne crosse heavy, which is all they can doe: so much are we taught, in that, howsoever he reproves their cries, v, 9. yet, saith he, *be in pain*; which doth not only import an assuring of them that the trouble was to come, nor yet only a concession, that it is no marvel they have pain and sorrow, but a command also to set themselves resolutely to bear it, as they are commanded to build houses in *Babylon*, *Jer.* 29. 4, 5, 6, and to make their captivity as comfortable as lawfully they may. 3. The right pondering of the fruit which the Lord brings out of the troubles of his people may help to crush discouragements

ments under them; *labour to bring forth like a woman in travel.* He ſets her out in her trouble, as travelling in birth of ſome mercy to make her forget her ſorrow, which ſhe ſhould minde much, and preſſe after. See *John* 16. 21, 22. 4. The Lords tender affection towards his people, eſpecially under trouble, may be a great lenitive to their bitterneſſe: Therefore is ſhee here called the *daughter of Zion*, which is a ſtile of tenderneſſe. A room in his heart will make an affliction to be no affliction, or very tolerable. 5. Every ſtep of the people of God in affliction is a ſtep toward deliverance: and the utmoſt degree of affliction, is the door next to deliverance, ſo much doth the ſcope and drift of this place teach; *the Church going out of the City and dwelling in the field*, was going toward deliverance, and when ſhee went even to *Babylon*, where in outward appearance ſhee might have loſt hope, yet, *there ſhall ſhee be delivered*, and is neerer to a deliverance there then in the holy City. Theſe things, rightly ſtudied, may take away much ſeeming ground of diſcouragement under trouble. *Doct.* 3. The Lord is to be eyed as undertaker for the performance of improbable-like promiſes, which may cauſe all difficulties to vaniſh; Therefore after that promiſe, *There ſhalt thou be delivered*, is ſubjoyned, *There the Lord ſhal redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies*: when he undertakes, it wil be eaſie to raiſe a *Cyrus* and make him do it. 4. While as the Lord promiſes in delivering to *redeem them*, it teacheth: 1. That the Lord wil reckon kindred with, and intereſt in his afflicted people, that hee may appear for them; for it was the part of the neerſt in kindred to *redeem*, and the word in the Originall intimates ſo much. 2. That they having by ſin ſold themſelves into captivity, *Iſaiah* 50. 1. Chriſt, by the price to be paid to juſtice for the Elect among them, ſhould procure their deliverance alſo, and of the viſible Church for their ſake: All temporall deliverances to the children of God, flowing from that eternall Redemption from ſin, and as an appendix to the new Covenant, and the viſible Church getting deliverance for the Elects ſake among them. 3. That for enemies, who had captivated them, as they had ſold themſelves to them for nought; ſo they ſhould be actually aſſerted unto liberty without any price, ſave onely ſtroakes to the unjuſt poſſeſſors, *Iſa.* 52 3.

Ver. 11. *Now alſo many nations are gathered againſt*

*againſt thee, that ſay, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.*

For further confirmation of his minde concerning her afflictions, he ſets forth, in the laſt place, his great and holy deſigne concerning the enterprize of her manie enemies, who in her enſuing calamity, and after her return from captivity, and after her converſion to Chriſt, ſhould be gathered againſt her, as alſo againſt the Church of Chriſt in all ages; and firſt, hee holds forth what is their purpoſe, (to the end his purpoſe overturning theirs, may be ſeen to be the more glorious) to wit, that they intended, and ſet themſelves to deal with her not as a priviledged place, but that they might pollute her as a prophane place, with blood and other abominations, and take her ornaments from her, and put her from her dignity; and that they might feed their eyes with ſuch a ſight. *Doct.* 1. The true Church hath the moſt enemies of any ſociety; for, *many Nations are gathered.* 2. It is uſefull for the Church to remark what enemies intend, and what our troubles would ſeem to threaten, to the end that more of God may be ſeen in delivering; for this end is the conſideration of the enemies deſigne premitted to the conſideration of the purpoſe of God: See *Pſal.* 124. 1,2,3,4. 3. As the wicked ſee no priviledg the Church of God hath, why ſhe may not be dealt with as other prophane ſocieties: ſo the greateſt bitterneſſe the people of God have in their affliction, is, that hereby not onely they, but their priviledges are trampled under foot by enemies; for, it is the ſad ſight they get of enemies deſignes, when they hear them ſay, *Let her be defiled*, or *prophaned.* See *Iſa.* 10. 9, 10, 11. *Lam.* 2.15. 4. There are many ſo wicked, as to account the Churches calamitie a pleaſant ſpectacle, and ſweet ſight to feed their eyes with; for, there are who ſay, Let *our eye look upon Zion*, which is an evidence of a deſperately wicked condition.

Ver. 12. *But they know not the thoughts of the* LORD, *neither underſtand they his counſel: for hee ſhall gather them as the ſheaves into the floor.*

13. *Ariſe and threſh O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs braſſe;*

*braſſe; and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many people: and I wil conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance to the Lord of the whole earth.*

Followeth the Lords purpoſe concerning this their enterpriſe; which is incomprehenſible and unſearchable by enemies, and quite contrary to their intention; as minding, by their gathering together, to ripen them for vengance: (as ſheaves are gathered that they may be threſhed) to the execution whereof he encourageth the Church, promiſing to enable them, and give them a compleate victory, which ſhould be aſcribed to him. *Doct.* 1. Enemies are not permitted to run at randome in their wayes, but the Lord hath an effectual and wiſe Providence over-ruling in all their deſignes; for, in all of them he hath *thoughts* and *Counſel*, and therefore we are not to eye much their brags, but looke to him who ſets bounds to them, and ſits at the helme of Providence. 2. The Lords holy purpoſes of good to his people, and wrath to his enemies, may be ſo conveighed in deep wiſdome, and ſo contrary to the way of carnal reaſon and probability, that they will not be ſeene by any natural eye, nor can be diſcerned by enemies themſelves, who are given up to run blindfold upon their own ruine: *They know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither underſtand they his counſel.* See *Pſa.* 92. 6, 7. 3. In one and the ſame action God may have an holy worke of his Providence, and men their wicked intents and ſinful courſes, they being carried on without an eye to his revealed will, which is the rule of duty; nay, nor to his providence either, but meerly for their own ends; and he making uſe of the ſame work of theirs to overreach them, and bring about his purpoſes; for in this enterpriſe, *They gather themſelves* for a ſinful end, *ver.* 11. And God *gathereth them as ſheaves* for an holy purpoſe. See *Iſa.* 10. 5, 6, 7. 4. The Lords end in letting enemies looſe upon the Church, beſide her trial from them, is to ripen and fit them for judgement; for, *he ſhal gather them as the ſheaves unto the floore*; to wit, to be trampled under foot, as their corn was by beaſts that tread it out. See *Ier.* 51. 33. Such as the Lord abhorreth, are let come in oppoſition to his people; and they are ripened for deſtruction thereby, partly while their cup is thus filled to the brim, which in other tranſgreſſions might be long a filling; partly, while he lets affliction out upon his Church, that ſecret enemies

mies may diſcover themſelves, and ſo be brought to the floore for threſhing. 5. Chriſts Church is not to look what ſhe hath in her ſelf for oppoſing theſe enemies that aſſault her, and for bringing about the mercies intended for her; but what he will make her, and how ſhe ſhall be enabled to ſet againſt and overcome all difficulties; and in the faith thereof, ought cheerfully to ſet to her duty; *Ariſe*, ſaith he, as to one laid by dead or diſcouraged, *and threſh, O daughter of Zion: for I wil make thy horne* (to puſh) *iron, and thy hoofe braſſe*, to threſh as was their cuſtome, *Deut.* 25.4. Upon theſe terms the weak may ſay, I am ſtrong. 6. The Churches victory over her enemies wil in due time be made compleat, and in due time Iſrael, and the Church of God ſhall have their many enemies under their feet, either as ruined, or true ſubjects, or tributaries; This is imported not only in that ſhe ſhall tread them with her *hoofes*, and *beat in pieces many people*, but in that *their gain ſhal be conſecrated*, or *devoted*, which alludeth to that of *Jericho*, *Joſh.* 6. 17,19. wherein there was a compleat victory given to Iſrael. 7. The glory of all the victories of the Church, and of the benefits obtained thereby, ought to be given to God onely; for ſo much alſo doth the *conſecrating of their gain and ſubſtance* (as the corn that is threſhed out) *to the Lord*, import: that as *Jericho* was offered to the Lord, and it was a ſin in *Achan* to take ought of the conſecrated things; ſo it ſhould be a ſin in the Church to exalt her ſelf, and not the Lord only, in and by theſe ſucceſſes. 8. The Lord onely muſt be the undertaker to get himſelfe the glory of all his wonderful dealing for his people, and make them forth-coming to his praiſe, and will alſo cruſh and ſuppreſſe whatſoever among his people would come betwixt him and his glorious deſign: *and I wil conſecrate their gain*, is the Lord ſpeech, though afterward he ſpeak of himſelfe in the third perſon. 9. The Lord, by his vengeance on the Churches enemies, will have himſelfe manifeſted and known in the world; and by his gracious dealing for his Church, and bleſſing her endeavours, will have himſelf acknowledged through the earth, and the kingdomes of the earth to become his; for, ſo much doth the ſtile, *the Lord of the whole earth*, teach, that as he is ſo indeed, ſo not onely by theſe victories ſhal he be known to be ſo through the world, *Pſal.* 9.16. and 59.13. but ſhall at laſt have his dominion acknowledged and ſubmitted to more generally through the earth.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

IN this Chapter the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and overturning of the kingdome being foretold, *ver.* 1. The people of God are comforted with the promiſes of Chriſts birth under whom they ſhould be reſtored, *ver.* 2, 3. and of his government in relation to his peoples tranquillity, their deliverances, increaſe and victory over their enemies, *v.* 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. his purging his Church from carnal confidences, *v.* 10, 11. and idolatrous courſes. *v.* 12, 13, 14. — that ſo he alone may be ſeen to do for them; *ver.* 14. 15.

**Ver. 1.** *Now gather thy ſelf in troopes, O daughter of troops: he hath laid ſiege againſt us: they ſhall ſmite the Judg of Iſrael with a rod upon the cheek.*

HEre is foretold the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Caldeans*, and the ignominious and baſe uſage of their Kings and Judges, 2 *Kings* 25. 7, 18, 19, 20, 21. as a fore-runner of the taking away of the Scepter from *Judah*, to make way for Chriſts birth, *Gen.* 49. 10. which began to be accompliſhed in the Babyloniſh captivity, in that none of the Tribe of *Judah* ſwayed the Kingly Scepter after that time, all which the Prophet foretells by way of defiance given by the Church to their roving enemies to do their utmoſt endeavours, according as God by his effectual Providence ſhould permit them to enterpriſe and execute, in regard that however *Jeruſalem* were taken, and their rulers ſo abuſed, yet they had a King to come out of deſpiſed *Bethlehem*, *ver.* 2. *Doct.* 1. Chriſts ordinary harbingers and forerunners, when he is to come with mercies to his Church, are afflictions to fit them for ſuch manifeſtations; for, ſo is this deſtruction premitted to the promiſe of Chriſts birth and kingdome. Afflictions are Gods means to purge out and cut off many whom he will not make partakers of thoſe mercies, to invite others to repentance for ſin obſtructing theſe mercies, to endear them to his heart, and make them capable of theſe conſo-

conſolations, which in their proſperity they would readily deſpiſe. 2. Jeſus of *Nazareth* is the true promiſed Meſſiah, who was to be raiſed to rule his people *Iſrael*, when their Judges and Rulers were ignominiouſly intreated, and put down from their Authority, who was held forth in the promiſe for the Churches comfort, when this deſolation began in their captivity, and actually exhibited when it was in completeing, their Kingdom then being by the Romanes reduced into the form of a Province, *Herod*, an *Idumean* made King, the power of their Judicatories reſtrained before, and in the time of his Miniſtry, and ſhortly after his Aſcenſion, their City, Commonwealth and Temple being utterly overthrown. So much doth this verſe, compared with *ver.* 2. and the accompliſhment in the New Teſtament teach us. 3. The Church of God, rightly pondering her advantages in him, may in him give a defiance to enemies utmoſt malice, ſeeing they can do no hurt but what he will make up with advantage, nor can they hinder any of his gracious purpoſes toward his people: So much doth this manner of ſpeech directed to the *Caldeans* teach, *Now gather thy ſelf in troops, &c.* 4. Oppreſſion backed with authority and great power, doth nothing diminiſh the hainouſneſs thereof before the Lord; for, albeit the *Caldeans* had ordered armies marching and acting at the command of Authority, and they would eſteem what they ſubdued to be lawful conqueſt, *Iſai.* 49.24. yet the Lord ſtiles *Caldea, O daughter of troops*; or, as the word ſignifies, *bands of robbers*; to ſhew that their great conqueſts were but great oppreſſions. 5. Whatever good the Lord brings out of the afflictions of his Church, yet ſhe may expect to be diſtreſſed with them in the mean time; for, *He hath laid ſiege againſt us*, ſhall the people ſay, importing that all the Land ſhould be ſubdued, the City beſieged, and the inhabitants thereof made to acknowledge their felt diſtreſſe. 6. The contempt and injury done to Authority and Magiſtrates; under whom a people may be kept from confuſion, and the Church protected, is a ſpecial ingredient in the affliction of the viſible Church; for, they do reſent it as a part of the affliction, *They ſhall ſmite the Judge of Iſrael*: ſo alſo doth *Jeremiah* lament the ſtroake even of *Zedekiah*, *Lam.* 4.20. 7. As Princes and men in Authority being wicked, do diſhonour God more then others, by reaſon of their greatneſſe, and it is their eminency, which oft-times makes them ſo much ſtand out againſt God: ſo the Lord in his righteouſneſs makes contempt

to

to be their puniſhment, they are ſmitten *with a rod on the cheek*, which is a contemptible ſtroak, *Lam.* 3.30. See *Job* 12.21. *Pſal.* 107.40.

Ver 2. *But thou Beth-lehem Ephratah*, though *thou be little among the thouſands of Judah*, yet *out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me*, that is, *to be ruler in Iſrael: whoſe goings forth* have been *from of old, from everlaſting.*

Followeth the conſolation of the godly, from a Promiſe of Chriſt to be the Ruler in *Iſrael*: whoſe birth as man is foretold to be in *Beth-lehem Ephratah* the City of *David*, (whoſe heire he was) in the Tribe of *Judah*, *Judg.* 17.7. called *Ephratah*, *Gen.* 35.19. and 48.7. to diſtinguiſh it from another *Beth-lehem* in the Tribe of *Zebulun*, *Joſh.* 19.10,15. By means whereof it is likewiſe foretold, that this City though baſe in reſpect of others, ſhould become great and indeed famous; and leſt any ſhould look on this Ruler as only man, and beginning to be at his incarnation; therefore it is alſo declared that he is the Son of God, whoſe generation is eternal. *Doct.* 1. Chriſts incarnation and manifeſtation of himſelf, is the true Churches chief comfort in all her troubles; for, therefore is his birth ſubjoyned to the deſolation mentioned, *ver.* 1. as the ſalve for that ſore. 2. Mercies manifeſted to any place or perſon, ought to be taken notice of, and marked, that they may be thankfully acknowledged, and uſe made of them: Therefore is the ſpeech directed to the City; that they may conſider the priviledge, *and thou Beth-lehem-Ephratah.* 3. Chriſt uſeth ordinarily to make uſe of, and honour moſt ſuch things as are leaſt conſiderable in outward appearance; As here, he will not be born in *Jeruſalem*, but in *Beth-lehem Ephratah*, which is *little among the thouſands of Judah*, that is, a ſmall City of few people, and governed by mean Rulers in compariſon of other Cities. The ſpeech relates to the diviſion of the people by thouſands under the government of their ſeveral Rulers, 1 *Chron.* 12.20. And therefore, *Matth.* 2.6. in ſtead of *thouſands*, the Princes are named who governed them: See 2 *Cor.* 1. 27, 28, 29. 4. Smalleſt and baſeſt things, by enjoying of Chriſt, or having relation to him, do become great; There-

Therefore considering the event, this text is read thus, *Mat. 2. 6. Thou art not the least among the Princes of Judah*; and the Hebrew text here may be read by way of question, which includes a denial; *Art thou little, &c?* No verily; though thou seem to be so; *For out of thee shall come forth, &c.* 5. The Lord in his providence useth to bring about the performance of his promises in strange and wonderful manner; As may be seen in the accomplishment of his promise, *Luke 2. 1. &c. Joseph* and *Mary* dwelling in *Nazareth* all the time after the Conception of Christ, and little thinking on a removal: at the period of his birth, are charged by the Emperours Edict, to go up to *Bethlehem*, that so the Word of the Lord might not fail, and that the prediction concerning the Messiah might be fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. 6. Christ is Ruler and King in his Church, he will be acknowledged to have dominion, and will performe the duties incumbent to a faithful Ruler; *He shall come forth, that is, to be Ruler in Israel.* 7. Christ in his Mediatory Office, as he is a King acting for God the Father, so doth the Lord especially allow of him, and will maintain and defend him and his Kingdom; *He shall come forth to me*, saith the Lord. See, *Psal. 2. 6.* 8. Christ the Mediatour is not only to be considered as Man, but that the same Christ born in *Bethlehem* in the fulnesse of time, is also true God begotten of the Father from all eternity; and so is God and Man in one person; for, *He* (that same individual person, though not according to one and the same nature) *who cometh forth of Bethlehem-Ephratah, He*, I say, it is, *whose goings forth have been from of old*, that is, *from everlasting*, or, *the dayes of eternity*, as the Original hath it. 9. Christs eternal generation as God, is superexcellent and incomprehensible; Therefore it is called *goings forth*, in the plural number, to shew its excellencie, wherein all excellencies, and infinitely more then we can comprehend, are summed up, though I do not seclude, but that herein both his eternal generation and eternal designation to the Office of Mediatour, may be imported.

Ver. 3. *Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travelleth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.*

The threatening and promiſe in the former verſes are conjoyned, and the way of bringing about this mercy is further explained, to wit, that he would give up that Church unto her enemies hands, to be vexed as a woman in travel, till Chriſt be born of that Nation, or of a Virgin among them; and then ſhould all his ſcattered brethren return unto, and be joyned in one body with the Church of *Iſrael*, which was in part accompliſhed when the Gentiles were ingraffed in the Olive, and ſhall be yet more, when the ſalvation of *Iſrael*, after their long rejection, ſhall be a reſurrection from the dead to the world, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in to Chriſt, and joyn with them. The Church of the *Jewes* had indeed a birth after her paine, at her deliverance from *Babylon*, but that was but a forerunner of a more joyful bringing forth of Chriſt the Author of her ſpiritual deliverance, until which time ſhe was for the moſt part under the power of ſtrangers, and did not at all recover the wonted dignity ſhe enjoyed before the Captivity, and therefore ſhe is ſaid to be *given up* until that time. *Doct.* 1. The Church had need of great troubles to prepare her for Chriſt and his ſpiritual Kingdom; for, as all their troubles will not exhauſt his treaſure: ſo it is needful by afflictions to make them ſenſible of ſin, to fit them for him; and it was needful to take away from the Church of the *Jewes* their carnal doating upon the Ark, the Temple and their other priviledges, that they might ſeeke after the ſpiritual things of his Kingdom; *Therefore*, ſaith he, *will he give them up*, or reject them, *until the time, &c.* 2. The great ground of confidence that the Church hath for not periſhing in her troubles, is, that ſhe is to bring forth Chriſt; *He will give them up until the time that ſhe which travelleth hath brought forth*, wherein is held forth, not only that their ſorrows ſhould reſolve in joy, as the paine of a woman in travel when ſhe brings forth; but becauſe ſhe is to bring forth, therefore ſhe ſhall not periſh, however ſhe be given up, but her ſorrowes ſhall have a period. This was the promiſe that might aſſure *Ahaz*, that the Church of the *Jewes* could not periſh, ſeeing Chriſt was not yet born in her, *Iſ.* 7 4. & is yet a ground of aſſurance that Chriſts Catholick Church ſhall not ceaſe in the world, becauſe ſhe hath Chriſt myſtical to bring forth. 3. Chriſt is a true brother and kinſman to all his people, and makes them to be brethren among themſelves; for, they are the *remnant of his brethren.* 4. Albeit no effects of Chriſts eſpecial love appear toward a man, ſo long as he is unconverted, yet he hath a relation toward

ward his Elect, and loveth them from all eternity; for, *the remnant of his brethren*, are the Elect Gentiles then unconverted, who are his brethren in respect of his eternal love in election, and of his purpose to make them brethren by Conversion, and so give them actual right to the priviledge, and a comfortable looking back to this purpose of good toward them, which was in his heart from all eternity. 5. All Christs elected brethren shall undoubtedly be converted and brought in to him; for, he undertakes for it, that the *remnant of his brethren shall returne*. 6. As all the Gentiles have right unto the Covenant and salvation, by flying in to Christ, and in him, serving themselves heirs to the spiritual promises made to *Israel*, and being ingrafted in that stock where they were; so the full fruit of Christs incarnation is not accomplished, till *Israel* also be brought in, and both they and the Gentiles be joyned in one body; for, this promise, *the remnant of his brethren shall return unto*, (or, *together with*) *the children of Israel*, imports, both that the Gentiles are brought in to the stock of the Israelitish Church, and that the children of *Israel* shall be brought in; to whom and with whom the Gentiles shall return. 7. That which is propounded as matter of comfort in a promise, may be much mistaken and stumbled at when it is seen in performance; for, here it is a comfortable promise to the Church of the *Jewes*, that *the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel*, and so be one sheepfold; and yet when it began to be performed, they repined, even believers of them for a long time: But in its full accomplishment they will look otherwise upon it.

Vers. 4. *And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the* LORD, *in the Majesty of the Name of the* LORD *his God, and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*

In the next place, the government of Christ, formerly hinted at under the name of a *Ruler*, is more largely spoken to, for the comfort of the Church, and particularly of *Israel*: Here it is held forth under the similitude of a faithful shepherd, feeding his flock, wherein he shall declare such care and stability, such invincible Power and Majesty in his Providence, doctrine and miracles according to the tenour of the Covenant of Redemption, as his Church shall be established, and his Name become famous,

and his Kingdom increased by the Conversion of the Gentiles throughout the earth. *Doct.* 1. Christ is a painful and watchful Shepherd and overseer of his Church, and souls of his people, and will bear out in his charge; for, *he shall stand*, imports both vigilancy, as being alwayes on his feet, *Psal.* 121. 4. and stability, that his government shall endure for ever. 2. God will both feed his people with wholesome food, and not suffer them to starve, and will rule and direct them in their wayes, and these two are to be conjoyned by us, that if we expect his feeding, we must submit to his Government; for, the word in the Original imports both, *he shall feed* and *rule*. 3. Christ hath all sufficiency of endowments for discharging his duty to his flock, which shall gloriously shine forth in the performance thereof; for, *He shall feed in the strength of the* LORD, *and in the Majesty of the Name of the* LORD; that is, he shall have divine Omnipotency to carry him thorough, and the fulnesse of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, shall gloriously manifest it self in drawing in, caring for, and maintaining his flock against all opposition: See, *John* 10. 28, 29. *Psal.* 89. 19. 4. Albeit Christ as God have power and glorious Majesty equally with the Father, yet as Mediatour he is also furnished for his calling, by vertue of the Covenant of Redemption, past betwixt the Father and him concerning the Redemption and Salvation of the Elect, wherein the Father doth undertake to furnish him with all endowments needful for his Office, and to give him successe; and he undertakes to be faithful for attaining that end, which accordingly he performes; for, it is *in the strength and Name of the* LORD, who is *his God that he feeds*, with whom he is in Covenant, and whose servant he is in this work. 5. By Christs care and Providence, his flock and people shall be established and protected, so as they shall persevere, and be out of danger of perishing, for *He shall feed or rule, and they shall abide.* 6. Christs care of and for his Church, if it were well seen, would make him famous and precious, as an ointment poured out, to invite others to come under his yoke, and it is his prerogative to have an universal Government and Kingdom over *Jewes* and *Gentiles* throughout the earth, which he will still prosecute till he obtain all that is in his Charter; for, *He shall be great to the ends of the earth*, imports all these. See, *Zech.* 8. 23. 7. The Conversion of souls unto Christ, and bringing them under his yoke, tends to the setting forth of the greatnesse of Christ, and the conversion of many doth set out his greatnesse the more, who doth

doth draw all theſe, doth care for them, and to whoſe fulneſs they flow and depend upon, and it ſhould be the care of all who are converted, in their expreſſions and carriage to commend and ſet him forth as great and ſuperexcellent: therefore is the enlargement of his Kingdome deſcribed from this effect of it, *He ſhall be great to the ends of the earth.* 8. Whatever is promiſed in the Word, is to faith ſo certain, as if it were then performed, and ought to be looked on as coming ſpeedily; the Lords chooſing of times and ſeaſons for performing his promiſe, being no delay in a believers eyes, nor impediment unto his faith to feed upon it as preſent, for this cauſe it is ſaid, *now ſhall he be great.* Gods keeping his appointed time, is great haſte to the believing man, *Iſa.* 60. 22. and the promiſe apprehended by faith, giveth the thing promiſed a preſent ſubſiſtence to his uſe and comfort.

Verſ. 5. *And this* man *ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land: and when he ſhall tread in our palaces, then ſhall we raiſe againſt him ſeven ſhepherds, and eight principal men.*

6. *And they ſhall waſte the land of Aſſyria with the ſword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus ſhall he deliver* us *from the Aſſyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.*

Followes ſome ſpecial fruits of Chriſts governing his Church; ſuch as peace and means ſufficient, not only to oppoſe the diſturbers thereof (ſuch as the *Aſſyrians* were to *Iſrael* of old) but to offend them alſo, and ſo they ſhall be delivered. However this promiſe ſpiritually conſidered belong to the whole Church, and literally alſo, in ſo far as is for her good, yet it ſeems to have a ſpecial relation to the Church of *Iſrael*, when they ſhall be converted and reſtored to their land. *Doct.* 1. Chriſt is the only Author and Maintainer of the Churches Peace; for, *this man* (or *this one*, the word implying a demonſtrating of him to others as one remarkable) *ſhall be the peace.* He pacifies Gods anger towards us, eſtabliſheth our hearts in the faith thereof, in him only have we true peace among our ſelves; for luke-warmneſſe breeds diviſions, and he it is that maketh peace in his

Churches borders, and creates a cloud over her. 2. The Church will not want enemies of her peace, and ſuch as will ſtudy to diſturb it, and may ſeem to prevail much, at ſome times; for, the *Aſſyrians* (or ſuch enemies as the *Aſſyrians* were of old, and the *Babylonians*, or *the land of Nimrod*, v. 6.) *ſhall come into our land, and tread in our palaces*; ſhe muſt reſolve to have peace with continual battels. 3. The Church hath her peace ſecured in Chriſt in the midſt of trouble, and, through him will have means ſufficient to oppoſe her enemies and maintain her peace; for, *he ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come*; and there are *ſeven ſhepherds, and eight principal men* to raiſe againſt him, or a ſufficient number of leaders (*ſeven* being a number of perfection, and *eight* yet more) with armies to oppoſe him. 4. It is a great bleſſing upon a land when the Lord furniſheth them with able men for government and rule in all exigents; for that is *Iſraels* mercy to have ſuch to employ, and they are the means of their peace and ſafety: *We*, ſay they, *ſhall raiſe* (or call and ſend out) *ſhepherds and principal men*: where their Princes are called *ſhepherds* with relation to the people as a flock. 5. The enemies of the Church, do oppoſe her alwayes to their own great diſadvantage in the end: for, the Church ſhall not only defend themſelves, but *they ſhall waſte the land of Aſſyria with the ſword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof*, or their borders, *or with their own ſwords. Babylon* is here called *the land of Nimrod*, becauſe he founded that Kingdome, *Gen.* 10. 9, 10, 11. and was a great oppreſſor, as his ſucceſſors were. 6. The inconveniencies which the Church ſuſtains by her troubles, do not prove ſo great as they may ſeem to be: for, *however he tread in our palaces, ver.* 5. *yet ver.* 6. it is but *treading within our land, and borders.* See, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9. and 6. 9. 7. As the Church is ſure to be delivered from her enemies: ſo the glory of all her enterpriſes and victories by them, are to be aſcribed to Chriſt only, whatever be the part of inſtruments in bringing them about; therefore albeit they *raiſe up ſhepherds, &c. ver.* 5. yet *ver.* 6. *Thus ſhall he deliver us.*

Ver. 7. *And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be in the midſt of many people, as a dew from the* LORD, *as the ſhowres upon the graſſe that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men.*

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The ſimilitude of *Dew* made uſe of here, leads us to a two-fold interpretation of this paſſage. 1. That the Lords bleſſing of the reſt, given by theſe deliverances to the Church of *Iſrael*, ſhall make her to multiply and flouriſh marvellouſly, as the dew and rain fals down in great abundance, ſuddenly and unexpectedly without humane induſtry; and thus the ſimilitude is uſed, 2 *Sam.* 17. 12. *Pſal.* 110. 3. 2. That the Church of *Iſrael* ſhall not only flouriſh themſelves, but be inſtruments of the flouriſhing and increaſe of the Church among the Nations, as the Lord is the principal refreſher and fructifier of his Church, and therefore his operations are compared to dew and raine, *Hoſ.* 14. 5. *Pſal.* 72. 6. So they ſhall be inſtrumentally as dew and raine to many Nations; that is, being furniſhed with the Spirit from above, and with refreſhing doctrine, they ſhall water them therewith, as dew and raine doth the ground, and ſo conquer them to the Kingdom of Chriſt, and be inſtruments of their fruitfulneſſe and bleſſings to them.

Both theſe interpretations agree in one, to hold forth the miraculous increaſe of the Church, either of *Iſrael* her ſelf, or of the Gentiles alſo by her means, as another fruit of the government of Chriſt over them, and may ſafely be taken both in here. From the firſt interpretation, *Learn*, 1. That afflictions may make many ſad and ſore breaches on a Church, before they recover out of them, for they are now brought to *the remnant of Jacob.* 2. The Lord can eaſily when he pleaſeth, reſtore his broken people, and make them increaſe, as admirably and incredibly as their decay was ſingular, and wil ſo do when they return to him: for, *the remnant ſhall be as a dew, &c.* 3. The Lords ſingular diſpenſations towards his afflicted people, will make them admirable and remarkable to all people, and above them; for, *they ſhall be as dew in the midſt of many people*, imports that they ſhould be conſpicuous, and exalted above all the people about thereby: See, *Deut.* 33. 29. 4. Reſt and deliverance from troubles is then a bleſſing to the Church, when it is followed with fruitfulneſs and increaſe of the Church; for, ſo this promiſe is ſubjoyned to that, *ver.* 5, 6. as a compleating thereof. See, *Act* 9. 31. From the ſecond interpretation, *Learn*, 1. The Church of God is a bleſſing to the world, if they forſake not their own mercy; partly, in that ſhe is a means of bringing bleſſings on every place where ſhe gets ſhelter and protection; and partly, in that ſhe is by her Miniſtery a means of mens converſion, begetting ſtill more and more to Chriſt, for which there is a pro-

miſe here, *She ſhall be in the midſt of many people as dew, &c.* See, *Iſa.* 19. 24. 2. The greateſt good that can be done unto the world, is to be a means of their converſion, and of bringing down ſpiritual bleſſings upon it; for, ſo is here implied, that the Church ſhall be as *dew and rain* upon them, which are choiceſt bleſſings. 3. All the ſpiritual felicity of a people, and the efficacy of the means bringing it about, is of God, and from above; for, it is as *the dew and ſhowres that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men*, that is, that depends not on humane induſtry: See, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. 4. The means of Converſion, eſpecially the Word preached and accompanied with the power of the Spirit (which God hath placed in his Church,) are as *dew and ſhowres:* 1. Becauſe as dew is the preſage of a fair day, ſo theſe means do flow from the favour of God toward the Elect, and are an evidence thereof. 2. As dew and ſmall rain are but ſmall things, and yet have great effects, ſo is it alſo with the Word, *Rom.* 1. 16. 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. 3 Dew and raine cannot be hindered by men, no more doth the power of the Word depend on mens conſent. 4 Dew and rain makes fruitful, ſo is every true Convert made by the Word and Spirit. *Doct.* 5. A converted perſon or people, joyning themſelves to the true Church, come under a ſweet yoke, and under the drop of many bleſſings; for, ſo doth the ſimilitude alſo teach, that as their converſion is by this dew; ſo being converted, they ſhall conſtantly enjoy thereof, and their fleece ſhall be wet with his dew, when other places are dry. 6. *Iſrael* being converted to Chriſt ſhall be the means of bleſſings, and of much converſion to the Lord among the Gentiles; for, it is *the remnant of Jacob that ſhall be in the midſt of many people as dew, &c.*

Verſe 8. *And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be among the Gentiles, in the midſt of many people, as a lion among the beaſts of the forreſt, as a young lion among the flocks of ſheep: who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.*

9. *Thine hand ſhall be lift up upon thine adverſaries, and all thine enemies ſhall be cut off.*

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Another fruit of the government of Christ over *Israel*, and a fruit of their deliverance, *ver.* 5, 6. is, that all their neighbour-enemies who are not brought in, they shall be dreadful to them, as a Lion is to other wilde beasts, who tears his prey, and none dare interpose. This being spoken of the Church in borrowed termes, *v.* 8. is again spoken to her in plain language, *v.* 9. for her greater encouragement, wherein she is assured that she shall be above all her enemies, and that they shall be so far crushed at least, as they shall not dare to professe their enmity. *Doct.* 1. The Church in her most thriving times, will not yet want enemies, nor will she be as dew, and a savour of life to all; for, so is here imported. 2. There is as great oddes betwixt the Church of God, when he is pleased to arm her with his strength, and all her enemies, how potent soever, as is betwixt a Lion, (a beast not so big as many others, yet God hath imprinted some stamp of Majesty upon it) and other beasts, or weak sheep, whom he easily and without resistance destroyeth; for, so much doth this comparison teach us. 3. The Lord requires that his Churches heart be setled in the confidence of his giving her victory in due time over enemies: so much the rather as it is hard to get it believed; for, this repetition of the promise, *ver.* 9. doth teach the difficulty of believing it, and his will notwithstanding that she should be established. 4. The Church of God needs expect no lesse then that in due time even all her enemies shall be cut off, and so may be assured of compleat victory, and converted *Israel* shall get a special proof of this within time, in being above her adversaries: and their enmity against her crushed; *Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.*

Verse 10. *And it shall come to passe in that day, saith the* LORD, *that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy charets.*

11. *And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds.*

12. *And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers.*

13. *Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee: and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands,*

14. *And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midſt of thee: ſo will I deſtroy thy cities.*

15. *And I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury upon the heathen,* ſuch *as they have not heard.*

A further fruit of Chriſts Government, in his purging his Church from theſe evils whereby they were corrupted of old, ſhewing the poſture and condition wherein he will put them, to fit them for theſe deliverances and victories; He foretels: 1. The taking away of all their humane confidences, ſuch as horſes, chariots, cities and ſtrong holds, wherein they confided of old, and deſpiſed his threatenings. 2. The cutting off of devilliſh arts and idolatrous confidences, ſuch as witchcraft, divinations, idols and groves for worſhip, which were much uſed in *Iſrael* of old, theſe were all to be deſtroyed and purged away by judgements to come on *Judah* and *Iſrael*, ſhortly after this prophecie; and in the time of their reſtitution, it is promiſed here, that *Iſrael* ſhall be a people ſtript of all confidences, that they may depend on God, and a people worſhipping the true God only in a pure way: and being put in that condition, he promiſeth remarkable victories over the heathen their enemies. *Doct.* 1. Chriſt will have nothing ſeen in his Churches protection and deliverance but himſelf only, nor will he make uſe of any thing which might ſeem to obſcure his glory in doing all: therefore whatſoever might ſeem to challenge any of that glory, muſt *in that day be cut off*: See, *Judg.* 7. 2. *Zeph.* 3. 12, 13. 2. Humane helps confided in, prove a great hinderance of deliverance: therefore *Cities, Horſes, &c. will be cut off*, not only by judgements to come on that people, but even *in that day* of reſtitution, they will be laid by as impediments. 3. Confidence in outward things is idolatry: Therefore, here their *cities*, *horſes*, *chariots*, (to wit, as they are depended on) are ranked in with witchcrafts and idols. 4. It is rare to ſee a people enjoying outward things that may ſeem to promiſe any thing unto them, and yet not confide in them; this is evident in that their *cities, chariots, &c.* muſt be *cut off*: they can hardly enjoy them and acknowledg God as becomes them. 5. When the Lord is pleaſed to deprive his people of probable means of help, and calleth them to depend on him, it is a pledge of his appearing in an eminent way for them: for, their *cities, &c. being cut off*, ver. 10, 11. *ſo will he deſtroy their enemies*, as the latter part of *ver.* 14. ought to be read, as

agreeing

agreeing with the Original also, and fitting the scope best in this place. 6. In the Church of God there is hazard of falling into grossest evils: for, here it is supposed there may be *witchcraft* or *magick* whereby men, wanting the fear of God, enter into one expresse or implicite league with the devil, for attaining such ends as their discontentment in their condition, impatience under affliction, envie, malice, or curiosity propound unto them, there may be *soothsayers*, or, *divinations*, whereby men not content to know their duty, nor with what God hath revealed of future events, do take sinful and damnable courses, and put other things in Gods room to foretel what they desire: there may be also *images, and the work of mens hands* set up in Gods room, as the object of worship, and *groves* or shadie places, where they pretended to worship God, or indeed worship their idols after their own imaginations. There are no evil courses but the Church of God, how reformed soever, is to be afraid of falling into them. 7. These devillish courses, and corruptions in worship do hinder the Lords appearance for his people: for, these must be *cut off*, that he may do for them. 8. The cutting off of idolatry and wicked courses is a work of the Lords own hand: it is he who oft-times destroyes them by sore plagues: and it is he only who can banish these things out of mens hearts: *I*, saith the Lord, *will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand*: or make thee not to practise it, *I will cut off thy graven images, &c.* 9. There can be no blessed delivery from trouble but when there is a compleat and thorough reformation of Religion endeavoured, and a destroying of the very monuments of idolatry: for, not only *shall they not worship any more the work of their hands*, but their *images and groves shall be cut off and plucked up*, and *so will he destroy their enemies*. 10. The Lord will appear for his Church in a singular, and wonderful manner, and plague their enemies with unuseful judgements, after that he is reconciled with them, and hath brought them to walk in his wayes; for, after all this is done, *I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard*, saith the Lord.

CHAP.

# CHAP. VI.

IN this Chapter the Lord again after theſe many promiſes, ſtirs up the Prophet to plead his controverſie, and expoſtulates with his ungrateful people, *v.* 1, 2, 3. ſhewing forth his kindneſſe toward them, *v.* 4, 5. and what duty they offered to him, *v.* 6, 7. with what they ought to have done, *v.* 8. which ſeeing they did not obey, therefore he gives an alarm of the rods coming upon them, *v.* 9. then he more particularly ſets forth and proves their ſeveral tranſgreſſions of their duty, in ſins againſt the ſecond Table, *v.* 10, 11, 12. for which he gives out ſentence againſt them, *v.* 13, 14, 15. and for their idolatry againſt the firſt Table, *v.* 16.

Verſ. 1. *HEar ye now what the LORD ſaith, Ariſe, contend thou before the mountaines, and let the hills hear thy voice.*

2. *Hear ye, O mountaines, the LORDS controverſie, and the ſtrong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controverſie with his people, and will plead with Iſrael.*

The Prophet propounds in general the Lords controverſie, given him in commiſſion to plead publickly, as it were in view of all the creatures, from the high mountaines to the low channels or foundations of the earth, this way of procedure formerly uſed, *chap.* 1. *v.* 2. doth yet further teach us: 1. That ſin cauſeth a controverſie betwixt God and the ſinner; for, *the Lord hath a controverſie.* 2. The controverſie is ſo much the ſadder as it not breaks out betwixt God and ſtrangers, but betwixt him and his Church with whom he dealt friendly, and who profeſſed friendſhip and ſubjection to him, and therefore he can endure their offences the worſe; *The Lord hath a controverſie with his people, and he will plead with Iſrael.* 3. The Lord is zealous to have the controverſie diſcuſſed and himſelf cleared; *Ariſe* (ſaith he,

he, the Prophets zeal coming ſhort of his forwardneſſe to plead this cauſe) *contend thou, &c.* and *he will plead with Iſrael*, that is, not only will he have his quarrel ſhewed, but will have it clearly demonſtrated, that he gave no occaſion of the diſcord, and therefore will juſtly puniſh, as the following purpoſe cleares. 4. Even inſenſible creatures are, ſo to ſay, more fit to be ſpoken to then an obdurate people, and will bear witneſſe againſt them; for, therefore (beſide other reaſons inſinuate on *chap.* 1, 2. are *the mountaines and ſtrong foundations of the earth called* to in this proceſſe; they keep ſtill their obediential ſubjection to their Creatour, and do tremble if he threaten, whereas *Iſrael* was ſtupid; and withal, theſe had ſometime been ſhaken and diſcovered for the good of *Iſrael*, *Pſal.* 18. 15. and 114. 3, 4. and therefore might beare witneſſe againſt their ingratitude. 5. A backſliding people are for the moſt part dull of hearing, and plagued with obſtinacie, and cannot be ſenſible of their caſe and danger; therefore is the diſpute repeated again, and they called to hear, *Hear ye now what the Lord ſaith.* 6. Meſſengers of God their reproofs are not to be ſleighted, but taken notice of as the Lords controverſie; for, *Micah* by contending, is to cauſe *the Lords controverſie to be heard.*

Verſ. 3. *O my people what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? teſtifie againſt me.*

Followeth the pleading of the controverſie, wherein God firſt appears, and challengeth them for their ungrateful departing from him and his obedience, which he proves by purging himſelf of, any wrong done to them, ſhewing that they had nothing to ſay againſt his diſpenſation toward them, and nothing to lay to his charge wherefore they ſhould have forſaken him, charging their conſciences, that as he had called the mountaines to witneſſe againſt them; ſo they would declare, if they had any injury on his part to complain of, and would bring out any thing they had to ſay, to clear themſelves of that crime of ingratitude. *Doct.* 1. It is the Lords love to his people that maketh him challenge them for forſaking him, and this ſhould make the challenge affect their hearts, and will aggravate their guilt if it do not. So much doth this ſtile, *O my people*, prefixed to the challenge, teach us. 2. The Church of God by her backſliding, doth raiſe an evil

report

report on God, as if he dealt not well with his people, and as if he were not easie to serve, for his enquiring, *what have I done unto thee? wherein have I wearied thee?* imports that their backsliding said in effect, he had done them injury, and wearied them with rigorous service. 3. However our corruptions do snuffe and weary in Gods service, as *Mal.* 1. 13. yet there can be no true cause shewed why any should choose to forsake God, but rather should cleave unto him, seeing his commands are not grievous, his yoke easie, trials sent by him not above measure, punishments not above deserving, and a Mediator ready to undertake for his people in all exigents. Therefore the Lord will have it disputed, and will have the consciences of backsliders to clear him: *wherein have I wearied thee? testifie against me*: See, *Jer.* 2. 5, 3. 4. To forsake the Lord without cause, and when men have nothing to lay to his charge, wherefore they do it, is great ingratitude; for, this is the scope of the challenge, that since they could lay nothing to his charge, and yet turned away from him, they could not shun the crime of ingratitude.

Vers. 4. *For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam.*

A further proof of his challenge for their ingratitude, is taken from his mercies towards them, whereby he further vindicates himself, and proves that they were so far from having any harsh usage to lay to his charge, wherefore they did forsake him: that on the contrary, he had manifested many rare and singular favours toward them, which did aggravate their fault: This proof he cleares from several instances. The first instance is, his redeeming them from *Egypt*, and that when *Egypt* dealt most hardly with them, and had made them bond-men, although the *Egyptians* themselves ought rather to have been slaves, as coming of cursed *Cham*, *Gen.* 9. 25. A second instance is taken from his conducting them through the wilderness, giving unto them a well-setled government and faithful Governours, such as *Moses* in the State, to give laws from Gods mouth, and to conduct the people, *Aaron* to be Priest, and *Miriam* their sister to instruct the women in that extraordinary time, *Exod.* 15. 20. *Doct.* 1. Mercies

received

received do contribute much to aggravate the defection of a people, so much doth this instancing of mercies in a time of defection teach. See, 1 *Sam.* 15. 17, *&c.* 2. Our delivery from bondage spiritual or temporal, inward or outward, that we may serve the Lord, ought to be an eternal bond upon the delivered to be for God: therefore, their bringing out of the land of *Egypt* (a shadow of spiritual deliverance by Jesus Christ) wherein God had manifested himself gloriously, is brought to remembrance, though past and done long ago, as yet obliging, if it were well considered: *I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, &c.* 3. The Lords conducting and guiding of his people in this world, under a sweet and orderly government, and honest governours in Church and State, working to others hands for advancing Gods honour and the good of a people, is a singular and obliging mercy, though the people enjoying it were otherwise in a wilderness; for, it aggravates their ingratitude, that he *sent before them Moses*, (who received Gods minde in Lawes, to them, *Psal.* 103. 7. who was singularly meek, *Numb.* 12. 3. and vehement in his affection to that people, *Exodus* 32. 31, *&c. Numb.* 14. 13.) *Aaron* who was *the Saint of the Lord, Psal.* 106. 16. and *Miriam*, though a weak woman, and extraordinarily employed, and not to be imitated in ordinary, yet the sense of the mercy should not have died with her.

Verse 5. *O my people, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousnesse of the LORD.*

A third instance of mercy is taken from a particular passage of his goodnesse in the wilderness, turning *Balaks* intended curse into a blessing, and causing *Balaam* against his own inclination to blesse the people, and publish Gods good will toward them. See, *Numb.* 22. 5. and 23. 7. and 24. 1, 14. *Deut.* 23. 4, 5. This instance is yet further enlarged, that when *Balaam* had counselled *Balak* to tempt *Israel* to whoredom and idolatry at *Shittim*, that so God might turn their party, *Rev.* 2. 14. *Num.* 25. 1. yet the Lord spared them, and justly brought *Balaam* to a violent death, *Josh.* 13. 22. *Numb.* 31. 8. He gave them victories over *Og* and *Sihon*, *Numb.* 21. he brought them unto the promised land, and in *Gilgal* renewed the Covenant by circumcision

cumcision, and the Passeover, *Josh.* 3. 1. and 5. 2, *&c.* By all which they might be sufficiently convinced of his fidelity in keeping promise in every thing. *Doct.* 1. Forgetfulnesse of mercies is the cause why they take so little effect, and produce so small fruit. Therefore he calls them to *remember now.* 2. The Lord in assuring his people that he takes pleasure in their prosperity, is pleased so far to condescend to our capacity, as to expresse himself as one whose heart warmed at the remembrance of wonted familiarity, and consequently would be content to have it renewed, therefore upon rehearsal of this benefit, he repears again, *O my people*; as if his affection were kindled and revived by the rehearsal; See, *Jer.* 2. 2. much more should it so work upon us. 3 As the Lord hath the power of cursing and blessing in his own hand, however men be disposed, so doth he turn intended curses against his people into blessings, he can when he will protect them against the fraud as well as the violence of enemies, yea, and make their very enemies befriend them; for, so much doth that history of *Balaam* and *Balak* here pointed at teach us. 4. The Lords sparing mercies, his goodnesse striving with his peoples wickednesse, and his keeping and renewing of a Covenant when their sins deserve that it should be broken, and his just judgements upon their violent and fraudulent enemies, ought to convince and engage his peoples hearts much to him; therefore ought they to remember for their conviction, what had past *from Shittim to Gilgal.* 5. There are standing monuments and experiences in the Church, which may abundantly satisfie them of the Lords truth, mercy and stedfastnesse in good will toward them, for their incouragement in walking in his way, and against every tentation they meet with therin, and for their conviction and clearing of the Lord, when it is otherwise; for, all these passages are rehearsed, that *ye may know the righteousnesse of the Lord*, or the manifold proofes of his fidelity in keeping promise.

Verse 6. *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD,* and *bow my self before the high God? shall I come before him, with burnt-offerings, with calves of a yeare old?*

7. *Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rammes,* or *with ten thousands of rivers of oile? shall*

*ſhall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body* for *the ſin of my ſoul?*

Having proved their ingratitude, the next fault challenged, is their hypocriticall formality; and therefore the Lord having cleared himſelf, and ſhewed what he had done, in the next place, the people are brought in for their part making great offers of ſervice and duty to God, wherein they manifeſt nor onely their formality and affected ignorance, but their malicious hypocriſie alſo; for, whereas the Prophet ſpoke ſharply againſt them, they are brought in complaining that they were moſt willing to appeaſe Gods anger, and ready to offer him all kinde of ſervice, (yea, even what ſeems impoſſible, and is unlawfull) if it would pleaſe him, and yet he would never be pleaſed, but his Prophets ſtill cry out againſt them. *Whence learn*, 1. The right way of worſhipping God, and of appeaſing his anger, hath been an old controverſie, and the truth thereof lighted on by few how clearly ſoever it be revealed: *Wherewith ſhall I come before the* LORD? (or *prevent the face of the* LORD, or, the breaking forth of his anger?) ſay they, as yet to learn. 2. Whatever convictions of ſin men may attain to, or whatever neceſſity they may ſee of being brought back to God by theſe convictions (both which may be ſuppoſed here in their profeſſion,) yet corrupt men do heal theſe wounds ſlightly, placing all their confidence in external performance of ceremonies or religious duties, and neither fleeing to Chriſt, nor regarding the ſubſtantiall duties of faith, repentance and new obedience; for, *ſhall I come before him with burnt offerings*, &c? is all they minde. 3. Men may have fair and broad profeſſions, and pretend much reverence to God, whoſe deeds do prove but ſtark naught; for, they pretend to *bow before the high God*, and yet give him no more but a ceremony. 4. Corrupt and unrenewed men had rather be at any pains, yea, even what is unpoſſible and ſinfully cruell, then follow Gods way, in fleeing to Chriſt, quitting their own righteouſneſſe, and ſtudying mortification of ſin; for, ſo are we taught by their offer of *thouſands of rammes, and ten thouſands of rivers of oile* (which could not be had in all the world) and their offer of their *firſt-born* to be ſlain in ſacrifices for ſin, as Idolaters do, and all this rather then the killing of one luſt. 5. Externall performances of religion prove oft-times a great

snare to wicked men who use them, and a great obstruction to the Ministery of the Word reproving sin; for, this was their defence cast in the Prophets teeth, that they were very observant of the Ceremoniall Law, and were ready to do more of that kinde, and therefore how could God be angry at them?

Ver. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the* LORD *require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*

In opposition to their way, the Lord sets down the true way of pleasing him, and of their duty, containing the duties of justice and mercy whereunto they stood obliged each to other, and which hypocrites ordinarily neglect, and their duty of keeping communion with God in humble and sober walking before him in the exercise of Religion, and all these as a fruit of faith, fleeing to God through Christ in the Covenant, whereby he becomes ours. *Doct.* 1. However men be ignorant, or contentious, yet the way of pleasing God is clearly revealed in his Word; for, in answer to their question he replies, *He hath shewed thee, O man.* 2. The Lords commands, (albeit they be the Lords injunctions to man, yet) are not rigid, or severe and unreasonable, as hypocrites would alleadge, but gentle and desirable; so is implied in that speech, *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, &c?* and in that they are called good. 3. The Lord requireth, especially of men professing Piety, that they make conscience of justice and equity in their dealing each with other, that so they may prove the sincerity of their profession, and may adorn it; for, *the Lord requires to do justly.* 4. Besides the duties which we owe to our neighbours in justice, there are other duties which we are also bound to perform in humanity, or by the bond of Christianity and charity; These are here called *mercie*, which though no humane law can reach us, if we omit them, yet *the Lord requires* them, and conscience and Christianity doth call for them. 5. Though love be required in performing every commanded duty, yet for performance of mercy, it is especially requisite, as that which bindes the duty upon us, and which must season the duty when it is a doing: *The Lord requires to love mercy.* 6. No duties can ever be acceptably performed by an unrenewed person, or one who hath not

by

by faith fled to God in the Covenant to be reconciled with him through Christ, that so his duties may be performed as fruits of faith, proving the sincerity thereof, and strength may come from God daily enabling him thereunto; Therefore also here God must be theirs by Covenant *thy God*. 7. A man reconciled to God by faith, ought not only to study to perform duties of the second Table, but to joyn therewith a study of keeping communion with God in the exercises of true piety, by both which conjoyned and flowing from faith, he may prove himself to be somewhat more then either a moral civilian or an hypocrite attaines to, and also that he may not provoke God to punish his neglect of keeping communion with him by suffering him to fal into some sin against the second Table: Therefore also is required *to walk with thy God*. 8. In relation to God, humility and sobriety is required in the performance of duties either of the first or second Table; there is no conceit of righteousnesse or merit to be allowed in what we do, but when we have done all, we are to come humbly to finde grace by vertue of a free Covenant; we are to debase our selves when we are before God in religious worship; we are in all sobriety and humility to receive commands, take on imploiments, and go about them with an humble dependance on him for constant supply of furniture: *Walk humbly with thy God*. 9. The people of God are to study constancy in their way, and especially in humility, and for this end the bond of communion with God, and interest in him is to be kept fast, and daily made use of; *Walk humbly with God*.

Ver. 9. *The* LORDS *voice crieth unto the city, and the* man *of wisdom shall see thy Name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

This verse contains a generall sentente given out against his people, and a Preface to the following special accusations and sentences. The sum is, that since they made no conscience of this their duty, though clearly revealed, *v.* 8. therefore the Lord by his Prophets gives warning of another teacher to be sent unto them; to wit, his rods and judgements, which they are commanded to hear, since they will not heare his servants, and to consider the author of them, that they may be affected therewith; and withall he declares that only the true fearers of God, who are indeed the wise ones, will take notice of God manifesting himself ei-

ther in the admonition, or in the rod. *Doct.* 1. Slighting of clearly revealed and commanded duties, will bring a rod upon a person or people; for, so doth the scope import. 2. The Lord doth not steal a judgement upon his people, but in great mercy forewarnes them of their danger, if they would make use of it; *The Lords voice crieth*, to give the alarm. 3. The testimonies of the Lords servants against sin, and their warnings of wrath to come in their publike Ministery, is the Lords own warning-peece to the rebellious; for, so is *the Lords voice* to be understood of his voice in the mouth of his servants. 4. As Cities and eminent places have greatest occasions and incouragments to serve God, so when they come short, their guilt is great, and they share deepest in the cup of afflictions; therefore *the Lords voice crieth unto the City*, that is, to *Jerusalem*, *Samaria* and other cities of the land, in which, as the Prophets preached most, so when the rod comes, they are alarmed especially, as those on whom it will light most sadly. 5. We ought to be sensible of afflictions sent upon us, as Gods Messengers sent with a Message to us, and the Lord will cause the most stubborn to feel his hand in them; for, this *Hear the rod*, is not only an exhortation to take the alarm, and be sensible of the rod when it comes; but a prediction, that though they would not heare the Prophets, yet they should both heare and feel this Messenger. See, *Jer.* 1. 15, & 6. 6. We ought not onely to be sensible of the smart of the rod when it comes, but chiefly to look to the hand of God in it, and to what he would teach by it; *Hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.* 7. It is an evidence of the fear of God to take warning of a rods coming, or to get Gods minde in the rod seen, and to be affected with it, and obey it, and onely fearers of God get this use of it; *The man of wisdome shall see thy Name*, that is, take up thy authority in these warnings from the Word, and discern what thou manifestest of thy minde by the rod. 8. They onely are wise indeed, who fear God, and who learn to make use of his Word and Providences toward them; for, he who feares God is called, *the man of wisdome*, or *substantiall wisdome*, that hath a being, as the word signifieth, all other wisdome being but empty and vain.

Ver. 10. Are *there yet the treasures of wickednesse in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?*

11.

11. *Shall I count* them *pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitfull weights?*

12. *For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have ſpoken lies, and their tongue* is *deceitfull in their mouth.*

To help them to underſtand his minde in the rod, the Lord enters upon a more ſpeciall accuſation of them for the ſins procuring the ſame; here he ſets before them their violation of juſtice and mercy, and charges upon them that by wicked meanes they had gathered great treaſure, which proved them to be wicked who did thus enrich themſelves. The meanes whereby they made this purchaſe, (or at leaſt endeavoured it) and for which they are challenged, are, 1. *Scant meaſures*, or *lean* in themſelves, and ſtarving the buyers. 2. Inexcuſable deceit in the matter of *weights*, and *balances*, bringing in more gain to them then was right. 3. Cruel violence uſed toward the poor. 4. Fraud and circumventing of one a nother, which was univerſall among them. All theſe accuſations the Lord referreth to themſelves to beare witneſſe of the truth of them, and poſeth their own conſcience, if notwithſtanding their profeſſions by externall ſacrificing, the Lord could in juſtice acquit them, and not rather abhor, and condemn and plague them. *Doct.* 1. The Lord abhoreth thoſe ſins eſpecially which are commited after many admonitions, & by ſuch as profeſſe much piety: *Are there treaſures of wickedneſſe &c.*? ſaith he, and that after ſo many admonitions and threatenings of the rod, and notwithſtanding your great Profeſſion. 2. It is a great ſigne of unſoundneſſe, when ſuch as are eminent in practiſing externall duties of the firſt table, can without ſcruple commit wickedneſſe againſt the ſecond; for, ſaith he, *Are there yet* (after the great offers of ſacrifices, is there yet ſo much unrenewedneſſe as to gather up) *treaſures of wickedneſſe?* 3. Exceſſive love unto, and deſire after riches driving men to uſe unlawfull meanes of purchaſe, is a ſure mark of wickedneſſe, let the purchaſer pretend to what he will, and of Gods diſpleaſure, however in his Providence he may permit ſuch to proſper; for, they are *treaſures of wickedneſſe in the houſes of the wicked*, and for this the Lord challengeth. 4. Deceitfulneſſe in weights, balances and meaſures is a ſinfull means of purchaſing riches, and a clear inſtance of injuſtice, which

is abominable in the ſight of God; for, ſo much do the words hold forth. 5. Even our ſelves ſeriouſly conſidering our caſe, may not onely ſee the truth of what the Word challengeth, but may eaſily judge, that God will not paſſe by approved groſſe guiltineſſe, nor juſtifie the doers thereof, whatever maſk of profeſſion they cover it withall; therefore the Lord appeales to themſelves, both for the truth of the fact, *Are there yet treaſures, &c?* and for the demerit of it, *ſhall I count them pure with the wicked balances, &c?* or, *purifie*, and declare them juſt? 6. Men ought not to dallie and ſooth up themſelves in a dream of Gods approbation of them in their ſinfull wayes; Therefore he puts them to it, to judge righteous judgement in this particular, *ſhall I count them pure, &c?* 7. However men ſtudy to blinde or put to ſilence their own conſciences, that ſo they may ſin without moleſtation; yet in the day of Gods controverſie it will be mens ſoreſt adverſarie, and plead Gods quarrel moſt thoroughly. Therefore he leaves this challenge at the dore of their own conſcience, as that which in due time would ſpeak out an anſwer to that queſtion, *ſhall I count them pure?* 8. It is a great ſigne of wickedneſſe in any perſon to imploy the power God hath given them above others, to wicked ends; *for the rich men thereof* (that is of the City, *ver.* 9. or of the land) *are full of violence*; Becauſe they are rich, therefore they are violent, and beare it out. 9. Violent oppreſſion and deceitfull circumvention are equivalent ſins in Gods eſtimation, as tending both to one end, to gather riches with wronging of others; and flowing from the ſame fountain, being onely fitted for diverſe times, and according to the diverſe conditions of the wicked; for, if they be powerfull they are violent; and if not, they ſupply that defect by deceit; Therefore is it joyned with the other, *the inhabitants thereof* (or, all ranks almoſt of the land) *have ſpoken lies, and their tongue is deceitfull in their mouths*, that is, as oft as they ſpeak they bring out fraud and deceit.

Ver. 13. *Therefore alſo will I make thee ſick in ſmiting thee, in making* thee *deſolate becauſe of thy ſins.*

Leſt by ſparing theſe hypocrites, they might think he was ſuch

ſuch a one as themſelves, therefore he gives out ſentence, and threatens them, explaining what the rod was, whereof he gave them warning; He threatens that by ſtriking and making them deſolate, he will make them ſick, that is, not ſo much ſend bodily ſickneſſe (which is a particular judgement of it ſelfe, *Lev.* 26. 16.) with their deſolation; as generally, that as they by oppreſſion made others faint, ſo he would cruſh them by judgements, and make them as weak as a ſick man. *Doct.* 1. Sin will lay a land deſolate, and leave a people helpleſſe and friendleſſe, and without comfort againſt croſſes; ſo much do the words hold forth. 2. Sin is moſt of all to be looked unto in our deſolations and afflictions; as having a greater hand therein then the power of enemies; Therefore doth he mention onely ſin as the cauſe of deſolation,---- *becauſe of thy ſins.* 3. Judgements for ſinne will not onely affect the afflicted man, but be ready to make him faint and ſuccumb; for, ſaith he, *I will make thee ſick in ſmiting thee.* They whoſe hearts are effeminate with love to ſin, *Ezek.* 16.30. will prove feeble in bearing the puniſhment of ſin, *Ezek.* 22.14.

Ver. 14. *Thou ſhalt eat, but not be ſatisfied, and thy caſting down* ſhall be *in the midſt of thee: and thou ſhalt take hold, but ſhalt not deliver: and that which thou delivereſt, will I give up to the ſword.*

15. *Thou ſhalt ſowe, but thou ſhalt not reap; thou ſhalt tread the olives, but thou ſhalt not anoint thee with oile, and ſweet wine, but ſhalt not drink wine.*

Followeth a particular enumeration of theſe judgements whereby he would make them ſick and deſolate; The firſt ſtroak is famine, flowing not from ſcarcity of proviſion, but from the Lords withdrawing of a Bleſſing, *Lev* 26. 26. *Hoſ.* 4. 10. *Whence learn.* 1. Threatenings giving out of old againſt ſin, ſtand in force againſt the ſame ſins in all generations; for the threatenings of the Law of *Moſes* are declared to be in force in *Michas* dayes. 2. God hath ſo immediate an hand in feeding men by the creature, that when he withdraweth his bleſſing,

the creatures, though given in never ſo great abundance, will not feed; for, *thou ſhalt eat, and not be ſatisfied.* 3. It is juſt with God to let ſuch as provoke him in gathering together outward things, know how far they wrong themſelves, while they doat on the creature, forgetting the Creator; Therefore againſt ſuch as provoked him by gathering of wealth, he threatens that all of it ſhould not ſo much as keep them from ſtarving. The ſecond ſtroak is, *their caſting down to be in the midſt of them*; that is, they ſhall be exhauſted in their own land, and with inteſtine evils, although they were ſecure of forreign enemies, or of captivity by them; Teaching, that as inſtine troubles are a ſore judgement and ſharp puniſhment for ſin: ſo the Lord can reach a perſon or people in the midſt of all their contentments, and can abaſe them as low by his ſecret curſe, as by any outward enemy; *thy caſting down ſhall be in the midſt of thee.* The third ſtroak is, that there ſhall be no poſſibility of exemption from his plagues, when they ſhall eſſay all meanes to preſerve what is precious to them, as wives, children, treaſures, *&c.* it ſhall be to no purpoſe; for what eſcapes at one time, ſhall be cut off at another. *Whence learn,* 1. Humane endeavours will not exempt men from divine judgements purſuing them for ſin, *thou ſhalt take hold,* to wit, that thou mayeſt hold faſt, or pull out of danger, *but ſhalt not deliver.* 2. When wicked and impenitent ſinners are preſerved from one ſtroak, it is onely that they may be reſerved for a greater; for, *what thou delivereſt will I give up to the ſword.* The fourth ſtroak threatened is, their being deprived of laboured-for comforts, the land being given as a prey to their enemies, who ſhould devour their proviſion, as they had bereft others of the fruit of their labours. ſo ſhould the enemy, or other inſtruments of Gods wrath deal with them, they ſhould not reap (much leſſe eat) of what they had ſowed, they ſhould not as in times of joy anoint themſelves with the oile they had trodden out, nor drink of their own wine. See the like threatenings, *Deut.* 28. 38, 39, 40. *Amos* 5. 11. *Zeph.* 1, 13. and the contrary promiſes, *Iſay.* 62. 8, 9 *Amos* 9. 13, 14. *Doct.* 1. Sin provoketh the Lord (however he be long-ſuffering and ſlow to execute) to make mans endeavours for his own ſubſiſtence to be vaine, whereof he will give proof when the cup of iniquity is full: *Thou ſhalt ſowe, but thou ſhalt not reap, &c.* 2. The Lord doth ſo in deep wiſdome contrive the way of his judgements, as they may give the ſoreſt daſh to the wicked, and may repay their ſin; Therefore as they by oppreſſion and deceit

reaped

reaped where they ſowed not: ſo now he will make them *ſowe, and not reap*; yea, he lets them *ſowe, and tread the olives and ſweet wine*, that having employed their paines, and being filled with expectation, their diſappointment may be the greater.

Verſ. 16. *For the ſtatutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the houſe of Ahab; and ye walk in their counſels, that I ſhould make thee a deſolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hiſſing: therefore ye ſhall beare the reproach of my people.*

Here we have another cauſe of Gods rod, and a further accuſation for their idolatry, which being ſet up by *Omri* and *Ahab* his ſon, (who beſide the golden calves worſhipped *Baal*, 1 *Kings* 16. 25, 30, 31, 32.) was followed by the people of *Iſrael*, and by *Judah* alſo, by reaſon of the affinity that was betwixt the two Kings at that time, 2 *Kings* 8. 18. for which ſin, whatever pretences they held out, the Lord threatens them yet further with extreme deſolation. *Doct.* 1. Idolatry and corruption of true Religion and the worſhip of God is the great cauſe of Gods controverſie with his viſible Church: *for the ſtatutes of Omri are kept.* 2. The Authors and Promoters of idolatry in the viſible Church, are marked and obſerved by the Lord; as *Omri* and *Ahab* are. 3. No injunctions of rulers, nor concurrence of publick authority can make idolatry lawful, nor juſtifie thoſe who walk in ſuch wayes, being enjoyned; for, it is a controverſie, *the ſtatutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the houſe of Ahab.* 4. No example of multitudes nor ſhewes of prudence, can juſtifie idolatry, or perverting of truth; *The works of the houſe of Ahab are kept, and ye* (both *Judah* and *Iſrael*) *walk in their counſels.* They thought it a prudential way, by conformity with the heathen to keep peace with them, and be free of the ſcorn of the wiſe of the world, becauſe of a ſingular Religion; but all this excuſeth not. 5. Whatever outward advantage men expect by corrupting of Religion, yet the nature of their work tends to a contrary end, and doth draw on all thoſe evils, which they by ſinning ſtudy to decline; for, whatever pretences they had, yet, *ye walk*, ſaith he, *in their counſells, that I ſhould make thee a deſolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hiſſing*, it expoſed them both to ſpoile and reproach

which

which they sought to shun. 6 Idolatry is a land-destroying sin, and makes a people extremely desolate and contemptible, so much also doth this threatening teach, wherin there are sadder things threatened then for their sins against the second Table: *I will make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants an hissing, &c.* 7. As the Lords people have their peculiar priviledges, so also their peculiar *reproach*, or punishment proportionable to their profaning of that great priviledge of his people, *Ezek.* 36. 20, 23. and that because sin in them, who boast themselves to be the people of God, is singularly great; *Therefore*, saith he, *ye shall bear the reproach of my people.*

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# CHAP. VII.

IN this Chapter *Micah* in name of all the godly laments the paucity of good men, and the universal corruption of all ranks (as a presage of approaching ruine,) *verse* 1, 2, 3, 4. And that no relations could tie men to faithfulness, *v.* 5, 6. yet comforting himself and the godly in God, *v.* 7. by the expectation and hope of a satisfactory deliverance, *v.* 8, 9, 10. by Gods promise of restoring them after some trouble, *v.* 11, 12, 13. by his promise to hear the prayers of the godly in behalf of the Church, *v.* 14, 15. and that to the astonishment of all her enemies, *v.* 16, 17. he concludes all with exalting of the infinite mercy, bounty and fidelity of God, *v.* 18, 19, 20.

Verse 1. *WO is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage*: there is *no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe fruit.*

The Prophet laments the paucity of godly men, who being as earnestly desired by him as a traveller would desire fruits by the way, and as precious in his eyes as the first ripe fruits are to men, *Isa.* 28. 4. *Hosea* 9 10. yet they were as rare to be had as fruits are after the gatherings of the vintage, there being only some few

few gleanings left, (as *Isa.* 17. 6.) to bemoan with him this decay, and in whose name he now laments. *Doct.* 1. The truly godly are very precious and useful in the visible Church, as being not only refreshful to other godly men, but instruments and means of bringing down blessings, by dealing with God in prayer by standing in the breach, &c. Therefore, saith he, *my soul desired the first ripe fruit*, so precious were they in his eye. 2. The truly godly may be reduced to a very small number in the visible Church, many who appeared to be such, making defection, and many of these who are indeed such, being taken away by death. *I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage*, saith he. 3. The want and decay of godly men is much to be lamented by the visible Church, and such are left behinde, especially by faithfull Ministers; *Wo is me*, and *my soul desired the first ripe fruit*, saith he: for, not only is it sad to zealous Ministers when they see not the fruit of their labours, but in such a time all the godly are deprived of sweet fellowship, and are by this decay forewarned of judgements to come. See, *Psal.* 12. 1. *Isa.* 57. 1.

Verse 2. *The good man is perished out of the earth, and* there is *none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net.*

He explains in proper termes what was figuratively set down in the former verse, to wit, that in stead of justice and humanity amongst men, cruelty and craft abounded. *Doct.* 1. Corruption once beginning among a people, will soon become universal, if the Lord prevent not: Sins of a time are such as few have zeal to oppose, or guard against: *The good man perisheth, they all lie in wait, every man hunts his brother*, saith he. 2. Those only are truly merciful to others, who have themselves obtained mercy of the Lord, and from the sense thereof are tender toward others: for the word rendered *the good man*, signifies such a one as is, so to say, *mercified*, or made up of mercy from God, and is actively merciful to others. 3. When mercifulnesse departs from among men, then also uprightnesse, or doing what justice or strict obligation requires, will not stay; the Lord plaguing the casting off of the one, with the removal of the other; therefore are these linked together, *the good man is perished, and there*

*is*

*is none upright.* 4. The defection of members of the visible Church is ordinarily plagued of God by giving them up to be most grossely wicked; for, *they all lie in wait for blood*, to oppresse or murther, *they hunt every man*, even *his brother with a net.* They are most intent and subtile in undermining and oppressions, and seek to entrap their neareſt friends, as hunters do pursue wilde beasts, and fowlers birds.

Verse 3. *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly: the Prince asketh, and the Judge* asketh *for a reward: and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire; so they wrap it up.*

For further confirmation of this universal defection, he instanceth it in several ranks: The first instance is in the person of great ones, who being bent on evil, such of them as are in authority, as Princes of the blood, and delegate Judges do avow bribery; and they whose requests are commands, do ask for gifts, and expose justice to sale: and so, such others in the land as are great and can give money, fear not to communicate counsels with the Judge, to defraud and oppress the poor; and the Judge and the rich man conspire to perfect what they have agreed upon. *Doct.* 1. Great men are ordinarily first and most eminent in publick and general defections; therefore they are here first spoken to. 2. The Lord especially marketh and abhorreth mens eager disposition to do evil; whereas he is tender toward such as through tentation and infirmity do slip; for, saith he, *that they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the Prince asketh, &c.* 3. Albeit it be a sin in Judges to receive bribes never so privately, yet it doth much aggravate the sin if it be publickly avowed: *the Prince asketh, and the Judge asketh for a reward.* 4. Sins are most dangerous, when they appear vailed under the name of vertue, or committed under the specious pretence of equity; for, so was it in this time of defection, Bribery went under the name of *reward* or retribution for their service and favour shewed. 5. It is a great iniquity when men in authority do not bear down wicked great men, but they have encouragement to do wrong, and may get their will accomplished with Judges, by reason of their greatnesse and wealth; for, so is complained of in this time of defection, *the great man he uttereth his mischievous device*, he dares utter it to the Judge for concurrence, and gets it put in exe-

execution on the poor. 6 It is an usual sin also, in declining times for great men so to play to others hands, as to strengthen themselves and one another in evil courses; for so was it in this time: *so they wrap*, or, *twist it up*: a similitude taken from cords twisted together to make them strong, signifying the conspiracy of the Judge and great man, that the one may get his bribe, and the other may make his prey of the poor.

Vers. 4. *The best of them is as a briar: the most upright is sharper then a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen, and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.*

A second instance of this defection, is in the persons of such, especially great ones, as seemed to be better then others: the best and most streight of which were both hurtful and catching, as thornes are: unto this he subjoynes a threatening, shewing that it portended the near approaching of the judgements foretold by the Prophets, wherein as they had formerly intangled others with their thorny griping covetousnesse, and strengthened themselves as twisted cords in their wicked wayes; so now themselves should be so perplexed as they should not know whither to turn them. *Doct.* 1. In times of defection there may be some ready to shelter themselves under this pretext, that they are not so evil nor so unjust as others; therefore a word must be directed in particular to *the best and most upright*, to let them see the vanity of that pretext. 2. No goodnesse or uprightnesse in men is sufficient to cover their declining after the sins of the time; therefore doth the Prophet speak even against *the best and most upright*. 3. Even men who seem to be well-affected and better then others, are in hazard to be drawn away with the evils of the time; for, so were they in *Micahs* dayes, with covetousnesse and oppression, which were the sins of that time: *The best of them is as a briar, &c.* 4. It is an evident symptome of a declining time, when men become covetous, oppressors, catching, and dangerous to meddle withal; therefore are the decliners here observed to be *briars, and sharper then a thorne-hedge*. Covetousnesse is the ordinary evil into which backsliders fall, and the ordinary forerunner of judgments, for then the world becomes an idol, and so is fitted for Gods stroak. 5. However the Lord may bear long with the filthy their being filthy still, providing the righteous be righ-

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teous still, yet when those who have a shew of goodnesse are either wicked under that mask, or cast it off, and run to the same excesse with others, and when men who are none of the worst, follow the sins of the time, and so the disease becomes universal, it is a signe of speedily approaching ruine; for, then *the day of the watchmen cometh now.* 6. It addes much to the weight of a rod, that the Lord hath forewarned sinners of their danger, and yet they have not taken warning; therefore is their affliction called *the day of thy watchmen*, that is, not so much a day of vengeance on their false Prophets and wicked Governours, as the day which the true Prophets foretold them would come, unlesse they repented. 7. The Lord in the dispensation of his Providence toward men hath an especial regard to his own Word carried by his servants, that the truth and certainty thereof may be seene; therefore also is their stroak called *the day of thy watchmen*, that they might take notice that what his servants spake was certain. 8. Gods Ministers ought carefully to study the condition of his people, and labour to stand in Gods counsel, that they may understand his minde concerning the Church, and faithfully give warning thereof; therefore are they called *watchmen*, by a name borrowed from the practice of Centinels in armies or cities. 9. Albeit men in their wicked wayes dream that they ought not to be accountable unto any, yet the Lord will take inspection of their wayes, and call them to an account for them; *thy visitation cometh.* 10. The Lord will so pursue guiltinesse with affliction, as the guilty man shall be entangled, and have no way to shift the rod; and guiltinesse in a time of need will reduce men to such straits and perplexities, such anxieties and pressures of minde, that they shall not know whither to turn them; therefore, saith he, *now shall be their perplexity*, or *intangling*; whereas to the righteous even in darknesse, there ariseth light of clearnesse and comfort.

Ver. 5. *Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doores of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosome.*

6. *For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother: the daughter in law against her mother in law, a mans enemies are the men of his own house.*

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A third instance of this defection in all ranks and conditions of men, is held forth in the unfaithfulnesse and inhumanity that was among them, insomuch that neither intimate friends, whom men do in a sort intrust themselves to, to be guided by them, *Psal.* 55. 14. nor yet wives are to be trusted in, yea, those whom the strictest bonds of nature, affinity or subjection would tie to be friendly, do prove treacherous. *Doct.* 1. Want of natural affection, and mens turning monstrous in their dispositions and behaviour, is the usual companion and symptome of a declining time; for, saith he, *the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother*, and so violate the bonds of nature, *the daughter in law against her mother in law*, and makes void the bonds of affinity, *a mans enemies are the men of his own house*; no bond of subjection will tie inferiours. This evil temper is foretold to be in the perillous latter times, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2, 3. 2. There is no sure hold to be had of any man, how strictly soever he be bound, who is declining from God, and hath not a tender conscience standing in awe of God; for in this declining time, *friends, guides, wives, sons, daughters, &c.* are not to *be trusted in*. He who is false in his duty to God, will prove true to none. 3. In times of defection and backsliding, as the godly ought out of love to believe all things, 1 *Cor.* 13. 7. and not easily take prejudice: so are they also to walk warily and prudently; *Trust ye not*, saith he, *put no confidence, keep the doores of thy mouth*, especially none is to be looked to for help, or trusted in, but only God.

Verse 7. *Therefore I will look unto the* LORD: *I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.*

Followeth the consolation of the godly, who lament this defection, and were to be involved in these common miseries and calamities, whom the Prophet by his practice in their name directeth to encourage themselves in God, and look unto, and waite for him, in hope of acceptance and deliverance; which is the general ground of encouragement. *Doct.* 1. The Lord makes use of troublesome and declining times, to drive his people the more to their duty and thrift; for, *therefore*, saith he, *I will look unto the Lord*. 2. There is in God sufficient matter of encouragement, to counterbalance any difficulty or dis-

diſcouragement that his people meet with in the world; for, in expectation thereof do they in ſuch a time *look unto the Lord*, as an alſufficient remedy to keep them from being carried away with a declining time, and from diſcouragement in a ſad time, by eyeing him. 3. In declining and ſad times, the people of God ought to be moſt earneſt in dealing with him, depending on him, and in expecting his help; for, the word ſignifieth that like a watchman ſet upon a tower, he will intently obſerve and watch, *and look to God*, and for help from him. See, *Pſal.* 5. 3. Lukewarm dealing with God, however it may pleaſe fooles in a calme day, yet will not bear out in a time of publick defection. 4. In the reeling and turning upſide-down of things here below, the people of God are not ſo much to look to theſe incertainties, as unto the immutability of God in what he is to his people; for, ſo much alſo is implied in his *looking to the Lord*. 5. With our faith and ardency in expecting Gods help, patient waiting is alſo to be conjoyned, by keeping his way, notwithſtanding difficulties or delayes of deliverance, and reſolving to have faith exerciſed before it get the victory; therefore doth he reſolve alſo *to wait for God*. 6. In all the people of Gods waiting on him there is ſtill hope and confidence, though it be not always ſeen to the waiter; for, the ſame word in the Originall ſignifies both *waiting* and *hoping*. 7. As it is the Lord onely who can ſave and deliver, and as he is the onely Saviour of his Church by vertue of the Covenant of grace made with her in Chriſt; ſo will he ſave all ſuch as will implore him onely in their ſtraits, and have all their ſalvation from him, and in him according to the Covenant; for, all this doth that ſtile, *the God of my ſalvation*, which is made the ground of his waiting, implie. 8. We ought to encourage our ſelves to deal with God, by acting faith, that we ſhall be accepted, *I will look and wait*, ſaith he, and that becauſe, *my God will hear me*. 9. God is bound by Covenant to hear the lawful and needy deſires of his people in due time; *my God will hear me*. 10. Gods hearing of our prayers, or confidence that he will hear them, is ſufficient encouragement in hardeſt times; for ſuch is the Prophets encouragement here, *my God will hear me*; A man that gets acceſſe unto God, and knows he will ſpeed in heaven, may deſie time to ſtraiten him, having ſuch a fair back door of enlargement.

Verſe

Verſ. 8. *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemie: When I fall, I ſhall riſe; when I ſit in darkneſſe, the* LORD ſhall be *a light unto me.*

The Prophet proceeds to hold out more ſpecial grounds of conſolation and encouragement; the firſt whereof is, that the Church hath ground of hope of a ſatisfactory deliverance, and in this verſe the Prophet ſpeaking in her perſon, directs her how to manage this hope of comfort, in reference to her inſulting enemies, to wit, that having ſuch ground of hope, ſhe ſhould reſolutely profeſſe the ſame before them, and contemn their inſolent mockery, and reſolutely endure it, till the Lord by actual deliverance put them to ſilence. *Doct.* 1. The Church of God may for ſin be deprived of the poſſeſſion of her dignities, and be caſt into a perplexed deſolate condition, wanting both comfort and judgement to know what to do: for, ſhe may *fall* and *ſit in darkneſſe.* 2. The people of God being in trouble will not want enemies to reproach and inſult over them, to embitter their calamity; for, here they have *an enemy rejoycing againſt them.* 3. It is no ſtrange thing to ſee the Church brought very low, and yet be raiſed up again, to ſee her fall is not to ruine; and her eclipſes not continuing; therefore doth ſhe expect to *ariſe* after her *fall*, and to have *light* after her *darkneſſe*: *When I fall, I ſhall ariſe, &c.* whereas the fall of enemies hath no ſuch comfort. 4. The Lord is all ſufficient to give unto his people comfort in trouble, and an iſſue from it; therefore doth the believing Church ſeek no other ground for her faith: but, *the Lord ſhall be a light unto me*; it being he who had undertaken, and who by manifeſting his own preſence could create comfort and iſſue in the midſt of troubles. 5. When the Churches priviledges and grounds of hope are rightly ſeen, neither will enemies be found to have ſuch cauſe of boaſting, becauſe of her trouble; as they ſuppoſe, nor needs the Church be much affected with their inſulting, but may profeſſe her deſpiſing them and it both, in hope of his help; therefore ſaith ſhe, *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy*; as if ſhe ſaid, boaſt at leaſure, ye have no ſuch cauſe as ye dream of. 6. However enemies having preſent advantage againſt the Church, will not give over their inſolent reproaching, which ſhe muſt endure in hope: yet the Lord by delivering her will put them to ſilence, and let them ſee that

their joy was groundleſſe: *Rejoyce not againſt me, when I fall, I ſhall ariſe, &c.*

Verſ. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the LORD, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, until he plead my cauſe, and execute judgement for me: he will bring me forth to the light,* and *I ſhall behold his righteouſneſſe.*

The Church is yet further directed how to manage this her hope of comfort, in relation to her guilt, which might ſeeme to ſtand in the way of it: for, whereas it might be objected, How could ſhe expect that God would be her light, ſeeing ſhe by ſin had provoked him to anger, and to caſt her into theſe troubles, and ſo was her party? She anſwers, that ſhe ſubmiſſively ſtooping, and accepting in theſe troubles the puniſhment of her iniquity out of his hand, did expect that in due time, the Lord, whom ſhe had provoked to afflict her, would plead her cauſe againſt her enemies who unjuſtly oppreſſed her, and plague them: and would reſtore her to her ancient glory, and in publick view give her to enjoy the effects of his bounty and fidelity. *Doct.* 1. The Lord may have fatherly indignation againſt his people for their ſins, and may teſtifie the ſame by inflicting of outward calamities, and yet not reject their perſons; for this cauſe is the godlies trouble called here, *the indignation of the Lord*, though men were inſtruments. See, 1 *Chron.* 19. 2. 2. It is the duty of the godly, when God is angry and chaſtiſeth, to be ſenſible of their ſin procuring the ſame, to ſtoop humbly under his afflicting hand, and to bear it patiently and ſubmiſſively, accepting the puniſhment of their iniquity: *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him*, ſaith ſhe. 3. Senſe of ſin and of its great demerit, will make men ſubmiſſive and ſtoop patiently under the rod, who otherwiſe would repine more: for, this is the reaſon of her bearing the rod, *becauſe I have ſinned*. This is the cauſe wherefore men get ſo many rods dipped in their own guilt, becauſe they bear not cleanly rods patiently, there being no croſſe ſo humbling as a ſinful croſſe. See, *Lam.* 1. 18. 4. True patience and ſubmiſſion unto God in affliction, ought to preſcribe no term-day unto it ſelf, but to refer all to his will: *I will bear until he plead.* 5. Such as humble themſelves before God, and patiently ſtoop under a procured affliction, may expect that God will take their part againſt all the inſtruments having

ving hand in the ſame trouble, and clear their righteous cauſe in reſpect of thoſe who ſought only their own ends in afflicting them, and their humility and patience ought to be ſeaſoned with this hope; *He will plead my cauſe*, ſaith ſhe, who *bears his indignation.* See, *Iſa.*47.6. *Zech.*1.15. 6. The Lord will not only clear his peoples right againſt their oppreſſors by pronouncing ſentence in their favour in his Word, but will accordingly put his ſentence to execution; for ſo doth ſhe expound his pleading; *He will execute judgement for me.* 7. The Lord having by affliction humbled his people for ſin, and exerciſed their patience and faith, will reſtore unto them their wonted priviledges, and as it were in publick view, and make manifeſt that they are his; therefore, ſaith he, *He will bring me forth to the light*, that is, not only comfort, but publickly own and honour me, *and I ſhall behold*, or enjoy to my ſatisfaction, *his righteouſneſs*, or the wonted effects of his fidelity in keeping Covenant, notwithſtanding this ſeeming interruption.

Verſ. 10. *Then ſhe that is mine enemie ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her which ſaid unto me, Where is the* LORD *thy God? mine eyes ſhall behold her: now ſhall ſhe be troden down as the mire of the ſtreets.*

This hope for deliverance is further commended from the effects thereof upon the Churches enemies to her ſatisfaction: ſhe is here directed to profeſſe her hope, that her enemies who mocked her faith, ſhould be confounded at the ſight of her deliverance, and be ignominiouſly cut off, to her great joy and ſatisfaction. *Doct.* 1. God ſeeth it fitting ſometimes to make his peoples happineſſe conſpicuous to the world, yea, even to their enemies, that it may make them a ſore heart; for, *then ſhe that is mine enemie ſhall ſee it*, to wit, her deliverance. See, *Rev.*3.9. *Pſal.*112.10. 2. Faith in God and adhering to the true Religion hath been an old ſubject of deriſion to the Churches enemies when ſhe was in trouble: for, *they ſaid unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?* 3. Scorning of faith and piety, whatever diſadvantage ſeem to follow it, ſhall reſolve into the ſcorners, ſhame and confuſion, by ſeeing God to do for his people according as they expected from him; for, *mine enemie ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her*, (ſhe ſhall be utterly confounded with it) *who ſaid unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?* 4. When the Lord

hath tried his people, then the cup is put to the head of the wicked, and the enemies of the Church, and mockers of her confidence will be destroyed as contemptible things; for, *now shall she be troden down as the mire of the streets.* 5. It will be a comfortable sight to the people of God to see Gods justice against their enemies, and his good-wil toward them cleared and made manifest after long trials; for, saith she, *mine eyes behold her.* Otherwise to take pleasure in the calamity of others, though enemies, is not lawful, *Prov.* 24. 17. further then in that God is hereby glorified in the execution of his justice, and clearing of his keeping Covenant with his peoples. See, *Ps.* 58. 10, 11.

Vers. 11. In *the day that thy walls are to be built,* in *that day shall the decree be far removed.*

12. In *that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and* from *the fortified cities, and* from *the fortresse even to the river, and from sea to sea, and* from *mountain to mountain.*

A second ground of encouragement and comfort is held forth in Gods promise to his Church, confirming her formerly professed hope: wherein he assures her of restitution, and of deliverance from the yoke of strange authority, and their cruel decrees, whereby they had been scattered among the Gentiles oppressed by tyrants, and the work of God obstructed amongst them, as when the building of the Temple was discharged, *Ezra* 4. 5, 6, 21, 22, 23, 24. And he assures them further of the enlargement of the Church of *Israel,* not only by their returne from all the parts where they had been scattered and detained, *Isa.* 27. 12, 13. but by the Conversion of many Nations who should joyne themselves to the Church, from *Assyria,* and from *Egypt,* and from all the quarters of the world: This *decree* may also without wronging of the text, be safely understood of the Doctrine of the Gospel (called a decree, *Psal.* 2. 7.) which after the restauration of the *Jewes,* should be sent through the world for promoting of this promised enlargement, whereby both *Jewes* and *Gentiles* should be gathered to the Church, as by the decree of *Cyrus* the *Jewes* were set at liberty to return to their countrey from all quarters where they were scattered. *Doct.* 1. The Church endeavouring to comfort her self with hope in God in her troubles, will abundantly be confirmed therein by God:

for

for after her profeſſed hope, *v.* 8, 9, 10. the Lord confirmes her here by a promiſe. See, *Pſal.* 27. 14. 2. The Church may procure by her ſins that the Lord ſhould lay her deſolate, expoſed to the fury of enemies, without all government, protection, or apparent being, and he may for a ſeaſon in juſtice ſo deal with her: for, *her walls were to be built*, and conſequently were ruined, not only as a vineyard with the hedge pulled down, but a city totally deſolate. 3. The Lord will in due time reſtore and make up the ruines of his deſtroyed Church and people: for, *thy walls are to be built.* 4. Gods time is to be patiently waited upon for reſtoring of his Church; for, there is *the day* for doing it, which he will keep, and no ſooner. 5. As it is one of the Churches great trials to lie under the power of oppreſſing tyrants and ſtrangers, who by their decrees and injunctions executed with rigour, do labour to ruine her, and bear down the work of God: So the Lord when he hath wrought his work upon his Church by ſuch a trial will deliver them alſo from that yoke, and ſet them at liberty to ſerve him, and enjoy tranquillity without ſuch interruptions: for, *in that day the decree ſhall be far removed.* This the *Jews* had ſome taſte of at their return from *Babylon*: and at ſome times thereafter, but it ſhall be more accomplished at their turning to the Lord, when there ſhall be no more decrees of captivity to follow. 6. All ſorts of perſons of all Nations have free acceſſe unto the Church under the Goſpel, and the Lord hath undertaken to make them come: for, *in that alſo he ſhall come even to thee from Aſſyria, and from the fortified city, and from the fortreſſe even to the river, and from ſea to ſea, and from mountain to mountain*, that is, generally from all quarters of the world, by ſea and by land, which ſeems to be expreſſed with relation to the ſituation of *Iſrael*; the borders whereof, according to Gods Charter, were from toward *Egypt* to the river *Euphrates*, and that which they ordinarily poſſeſſed, was bounded by the eaſt or dead ſea, the weſt or great ſea, and by the mountaines *Lebanon*, and *Hor* on the North, and other mountaines in the wilderneſſe toward the South. See, *Exod.* 23. 31. *Numb.* 34. *Joſh.* 1. 4. and elſewhere. 7. In the Church of the Goſpel the Lord hath determined that the Church of the *Jews* or *Iſrael* ſhall be very eminent, not only as being the mother-Church of old, from whence the Goſpel came to call all Nations to joyn with her, but as being yet to be made ſo conſpicuous, as will invite many Nations to come in to Chriſt, and to be made a means of their Converſion: In relation to both theſe times it is ſaid to the Church of the

*Jewes, in that day he ſhall come even to thee, &c.* alluding to the Proſelytes coming up to *Jeruſalem* of old. 8. The priviledges and advantages of the Church of God being rightly ſeen, may and will prevail even with her greateſt enemies, and with ſuch as have their own good accommodations, to lay down their enmity, and renounce all, and come and ſhare with her; for, *he ſhall come to thee from Aſſyria*, her moſt inveterate enemy, *and from the fortified cities, and from the fortreſſe*, by which *Egypt* ſeems to be ſignified, which was well fortified by Nature and Art, and the Hebrew word here hath affinity with the Hebrew name of *Egypt*, and withal *Aſſyria* and *Egypt* are ordinarily joyned in ſuch promiſes, *Iſa* 19. 23, 24, 25. 9. The Lords meanes for gathering and enlarging of his Church, is the preaching of his Goſpel, whereby he leads all captive unto the obedience of Chriſt; for, ſo much doth the other interpretation of *the decree* teach us, *the decree ſhall be far removed*, and *he ſhall come, &c.* Where the Goſpel may be called *a decree*, as containing Gods eternal Purpoſe and Ordinance concerning the ſalvation of ſinners publiſhed in his Name to the world, for ſinners to lay hold upon, and the efficacy thereof depending upon Gods counſel and decree. 10. The publiſhing and prevailing of the Goſpel through the world, notwithſtanding all impediments and oppoſition, is a work wherein the hand and power of God is to be ſeen for what is already done, and to be reſted upon for what is to be accompliſhed; for it is he only who can undertake, that *the decree ſhall be far removed.*

Verſ. 13. *Notwithſtanding the land ſhall be deſolate, becauſe of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.*

Leſt the people ſhould flatter themſelves in their ſins, a caution is ſubjoyned, for the right underſtanding of this promiſe ſhewing that before the performance thereof a deſolation muſt be, becauſe of their ſins, which was accompliſhed firſt by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and again by the *Romanes*. *Doct.* 1. The promiſes of God ought to be warily heeded, and rightly underſtood and applied, that ſecure ſinners ſuck not poiſon from them; therefore is a caution given to be taken along: *Notwithſtanding the land ſhall be deſolate.* 2. God may carry thoughts of love to his people, hid in his heart for a long time, and may let out much trouble on them,

whom

whom he loveth and purpoſeth to manifeſt love unto; for, *Notwithſtanding*, (to wit, that he hath a purpoſe to enlarge her, v. 12. yet) *the land ſhall be deſolate.* See *Jer.* 29. 10, 11. 3. The reaſon of the Lords ſtriking a people, toward whom he hath a purpoſe of love, is their ſin, for which he will plague their contentments, lay their habitation deſolate, and make them taſte of the bitterneſſe of their way in departing from him; that ſo they may be humbled and fitted for his mercy, and that he may cut off wicked generations, and raiſe up others to enjoy his mercies: for, *The land ſhall be deſolate, becauſe of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.*

Verſ. 14. *Feed thy people with the rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell ſolitarily* in *the wood in the midſt of Carmel: let them feed in Baſhan and Gilead, as in the dayes of old.*

15. *According to the dayes of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I ſhew unto him marvellous things.*

A third ground of encouragement is held forth, in an anſwer to the Prophets prayer; who upon the mentioning of the enſuing deſolation, turnes himſelf to God, or to Chriſt the great Shepherd, requeſting that he would have a care of his ſcattered and deſolate people, in whom he had ſo much intereſt, and would at laſt bring them to enjoy the wonted ſweet fruits of his Government, and feed them as flocks were fed in the fruitful paſtures of *Baſhan* and *Gilead*, *Numb.* 32. 1. *Deut.* 32. 14. To which anſwer is returned in a promiſe, that they ſhall get a delive ance, no leſſe famous and miraculous, then when they were delivered of old from *Egypt*. This promiſe is both ſpoken of the Church and to her, not only becauſe ſhe was abundantly ſatisfied of the firſt, and therefore it is ſpoken to her to ſtir her up to believe the other, but to ſhew the Lords conſtancy in doing her good in that, ſo to ſay, both before her face, and behinde her back he is the ſame. *Doct.* 1. Sense of judgements immiment or incumbent, doth call for much prayer and dealing with God: for, ſuch uſe doth the Prophet make of the threatened deſolation. 2. The Church of Chriſt in her trouble eſpecially, is in a ſolitary condition, and full of hazard, being diſconſolate, and expoſed to want and danger, unleſſe he have a care of her; for, *They dwelt ſolitarily in the wood in the midſt of Carmel:* they

are like a solitary flock in woods and mountaines; and albeit *Carmel* signifie a fruitful place, and was so in the land of *Canaan*, *Isa.* 33. 9. and 35. 2. 2 *Kings* 19. 23. and elsewhere, yet it is here taken in with *the woods* to shew that their most fruitful places in exile should look like a wildernesse to them; or, because it was an open field, and mountain, and consequently not safe, though others joyne that rather with the latter part of the verse; *Let them feed in the midst of Carmel, in Bashan, &c.* and so it is also expressed, *Jer.* 50. 19. 3. Christ is the only Shepherd, to whose care the Church is concredited, and who will have a special care of them in trouble; for to him doth the Prophet pray, *Feed thy people which dwell solitarily.* 4. Christ doth not only feed his people, but doth exercise a jurisdiction over them, whereby he keeps them in subjection to him, drives them to their food, and expels noxious humours, which may hinder their feeding and thriving; and he doth also by his power protect them whom he thus feedeth and governeth: all which are desirable, and to be prayed for from him: *Feed thy people with thy rod.* See, *Psal.* 23. 4. 5. Christ hath many relations to, and interests in his Church, not broken off by any trouble, to endear her to his affection and care, and which may encourage faith to go to him in need; therefore, saith he, *Feed thy people, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily, &c.* Notwithstanding their desolate condition, they are his peculiar portion, wherein he hath not a temporary, but an eternal right, as men have to their *heritage* in all generations: and accordingly he will care for and possesse them, and this Charter and Priviledge stands fast to the Church of the Jews here prayed for, to be manifested after all their dispersions. 6. Christ hath ample allowance to bestow upon his people, and all fulnesse for faith to lay hold upon in prayer, for the supply of every need; for, he can make them *feed in Bashan and Gilead*, which were fruitful pastures for flocks; though in relation to *Israel* this may be understood more particularly of restoring them to their own fruitful land, to enjoy it in its full extent, even to *Bashan* and *Gilead*, which lay far off beyond *Jordan*. See, *Jer.* 50. 19. 7. The Church of God hath rich experiences of his former goodnesse, to encourage her in her present suits, whereof faith ought to make use; therefore, saith he, *Let them feed as in the dayes of old.* 8. Christ will not deny the needy and lawful desires of his people, particularly such as flow from publick-mindednesse, and are put up for the Church; but will take

charge

charge of his afflicted people, to give them a bleſſed iſſue; for, the requeſt is here granted. 9. As Chriſt is Omnipotent, ſo he will do wonders, if need requires, for the behoof of his people, and he takes pleaſure to convey the expreſſions of his love to them, and to bring about their deliverance to their own and others admiration; for, *I will ſhew him* (or make him to enjoy) *marvellous things.* 10. As Chriſts manifeſting of himſelf in former times for his people, engageth him to do yet more for them; ſo will he make good whatever they have ground from former experience to expect; for, *According to the dayes of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, I will ſhew him marvellous things*; where faith is not only to feed upon the great acts he did, but alſo upon the way of his doing of them, his paſſing over their iniquities, their murmurings and unbelief, his reducing them to ſtraits before he appea... for them, his working by ſmall, unlikely and contrary means, &c. 11. The Lord ſtands engaged to his ancient people, to give them a deliverance from their troubles aud bondage, as great and wonderful as that from *Egypt* was; for, ſo is expreſſely promiſed: and albeit this be ſpiritually accompliſhed, and daily accompliſhing in the ſpiritual deliverances of the *Iſrael* of God, yet this promiſe is made chiefly to the Church of *Iſrael*, in relation to their deſolation; and albeit ſome pledge of this was given at their return from *Babylon*, yet then it came ſhort among other things of the deliverance from *Egypt*, in that it was not National, even of the Jewes; and therefore it ſeems to have relation to the time of the reſtitution and ſaving of all *Iſrael*, which will be ſo great a mercy, as will in a ſort obſcure former mercies, *Jer.* 16. 14, 15.

Verſ. 16. *The Nations ſhall ſee, and be confounded at all their might, they ſhall lay their hand upon* their *mouth, their eares ſhall be deafe.*

17. *They ſhall lick the duſt like a ſerpent, they ſhall move out of their holes like wormes of the earth, they ſhall be afraid of the* LORD *our* God, *and ſhall fear becauſe of thee.*

A fourth ground of encouragement, and a conſequent of the former, is taken from the effects, which all theſe ſhall have amongſt enemies, who ſeeing all this mighty Power of God appearing for the Church, ſhall be aſtoniſhed and made deaf with the fame of Gods acts, and dumb, that they dare not ſpeak (as formerly) proud things: and the terrour of Gods Majeſty appearing in and for his Church, ſhall ſo ſeize upon them, as to make them with all fear and ſubjection ſubmit to God and his Church, ſtooping as low as ſerpents and creeping things. See, *Pſal.* 72. 9. *Iſa.* 49 23. All which doth not neceſſarily infer their true Converſion, but only that they ſhall yield feigned obedience, and pretend friendſhip to ſecure themſelves. *Doct.* 1. The deliverance of the Church of God is brought about in ſuch a way, as natural men conſulting with reaſon, could never have expected it; therefore *the Nations ſhall ſee and be confounded.* 2. The Lord ſeeth it fitting at ſome times, not only to be kinde to his people, but to give publick demonſtrations of his good will to them, in ſuch a meaſure as may aſtoniſh all beholders; for, *the Nations ſhall ſee and be confounded, they ſhall lay their hand upon their mouth, &c.* See, *Pſal.* 126. 2. 3. The Churches priviledges and ſtrength being well ſeen, will be terrible to enemies in their greateſt power; for, *They ſhall be confounded at all their* (that is, the Churches) *might*, or, for *all their might*, that is, all the power they themſelves thought they had, ſhall not keep them from confuſion, but they ſhall be aſtoniſhed ſo much the more that it hath proved vaine. 4. Men without God, and not walking in his way are eaſily confounded when the Lord turneth his hand againſt them, and to do for his people; for, they who no doubt were inſolent and proud before, *ſhall lay their hand upon their mouth, &c.* 5. Gods wonderful works of providence in behalf of his people, and againſt their enemies, do ordinarily produce but vaniſhing and empty fruits in the world, and amongſt enemies, as either to confound and aſtoniſh them, as if they were dumb and deaf, when what God hath done for his people is mentioned; *They ſhall be confounded, they ſhall lay their hand on their mouth, their eares ſhall be deafe.* Or, if they work any more, it is but pretended ſubjection, and friendſhip out of feare: *They ſhall lick the duſt like a ſerpent, they ſhall move out of their holes, &c. They ſhall be afraid* So hard a piece of work are mens hearts to work upon, eſpecially being once engaged in enmity againſt God and his people, and ſo hard, if not impoſſible, is it for any work to work ſavingly where the

the Word hath not place, and where mens misery and Gods mercy are not discovered to them. 6. It is a great proof of Gods power, and matter of encouragement to the Church, to see their enemies brought so low, as to yield, if it were but feigned obedience, and pretend friendship, as is usual in the time of the Churches prosperity; for, it is an encouragement; *That they shall lick the dust like a Serpent, &c.* We are to be sensible and warie of the falshood of some, who pretend to serve Christ, and to be friends to his Church, as withal to adore the Power of God, making them to stoop so far, as to *lie*, as it is, *Psal.* 66. 3. in the original. 7. All the glory of bringing down enemies, and the making them to stoop, is to be ascribed only to God; the Church being so terrible only, because of Gods interest in her, and presence with her: *They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and feare because of thee.* The latter part of which speech may either be understood of God, the sweetnesse of the encouragement making them turn the speech to him, by way of warme and hearty acknowledgement; or of the Church made dreadful, because God maketh manifest, that he is hers by Covenant.

Vers. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth* in *mercy.*

In consideration of all these encouragements, the Prophet in the Churches name concludes all with a commendation of God, as singular in his mercy, *ver.* 18, 19. and his fidelity, *ver.* 20. He begins at mercy, and sets it out in a speech full of various affections, sometime directed to God by way of praise, sometime spoken of God for the Churches own encouragement, sometime spoken with particular application to themselves, sometime with relation to all the people of God, to set forth the publick-mindednesse of all such as have obtained mercy. He instanceth this singular mercy of God in the matter of pardoning sinne, which being propounded in this verse, is further cleared from two expressions, setting forth more of the riches of this benefit, and of the security and comfort may be had by it *Doct.* 1. Mercies received from God, ought to commend and endear himself to our hearts; therefore after rehearsal of mercies, he falls to commend the giver. 2. The Lord being rightly seene and

taken

taken up in himſelf and his diſpenſations, will be found ſingular and matchleſſe, as one of whom we may boaſt over all idol-gods, whoſe wayes are only beſt to be followed, who will do ſingular things for his people, and make them ſingular, and conſequently who ought to be ſingular in their affection; *Who is a God like unto thee?* ſaith he. 3. Gods matchleſneſſe appears to his people, and doth affect their hearts, not ſo much in acts of his power abſolutely conſidered, (though they ought to be ſenſible of theſe alſo,) as in his acts of grace, and his being great in his Chriſt, pardoning ſin; yea, when great things are done or promiſed to them, they wonder not ſo much at theſe, as that his mercy ſhould come over their tranſgreſſions, to make way for theſe great things. Therefore they declare there is no God like him, *who pardoneth iniquity*; and when they heare of all the former encouragements, they admire this above them all, that their ſin had not ſtood in the way of theſe mercies, and that becauſe the godly are ſenſible of the deſert of ſin, and of their inability to ſatisfie juſtice for it, and therefore pardon is ſweet above all to them. 4. Outward mercies were they never ſo great and full, will never yield true ſatisfaction, unleſſe they be joyned with reconciliation with God, and pardon of ſin, ſo alſo are we taught here, all the former encouragements do refreſh, when they may alſo admire and rejoyce in God, *who pardoneth iniquity*. 5. God by a free pardon, will for his Chriſts ſake lift off and take away the burden of the guilt of ſin, were it never ſo great, from off his wearied people, who flee to him for refuge, and ſo eaſe them of it, and give them ground of quietneſſe in their conſcience: for, ſo doth the word in the Original rendered *pardoning* import, and it is extended even to *iniquity and tranſgreſſion*, and this is the only way to get true eaſe and deliverance from ſin. 6. The ſelf-condemned ſinner in looking for pardon from God, ought to look upon him as ſingular, and not meaſure his condeſcendence or mercy by their thoughts, or by any other mould, but expect that as he is matchleſſe, ſo is his mercy, pity and love; for, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?* doth teach us ſo much: and this is to be taken along with every expreſſion of pardon, that he is matchleſſe that doth that, and doth it matchleſly.

The firſt expreſſion clearing this benefit yet further is, *and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage*; wherein pardon is expounded to be a paſſing over, or, ſo to ſay, a ſeeing,

ing, and yet not seeing the faults of his people; and withal it is declared to whom this benefit doth belong. *Whence learn*, 1. So great and many are sinful mans provocations, and so great is his inability, either to be rid of them, or satisfie God for them, that there is no way of reconciliation betwixt God and him, but by the Lords quitting the plea, and passing over his faults, not calling him to any strict account for them, and this he doth to those who see their own faults much, and flee to him through Christ; for, *he passeth by*, or, *over transgression*, *Isa.* 57. 17, 18. *Gen.* 8. 21. *Psal.* 130. 3, 4. 2. These advantages are not to be expected by all, but by the Lords own, who are his *heritage*, which imports on their part, that they close with God as a constant portion, intending to be his heritage, which is a qualification required in them, who come for quieting of the conscience from particular guiltinesse; and on Gods part it imports, that whatever just displeasure he conceive against them, yet at last he will be reconciled with his *heritage*. They are also called *the remnant*, which is another argument why he pardons, to wit, that being already consumed in part for sin, they would be utterly destroyed, if mercy end not the controversie. 3. Those whom God doth pardon, are expressed under the name of the *remnant of his heritage*, or of a remnant of *Israel* after trouble: not only because this benefit is reserved for them also, and spoken of here, with especial relation to them, and will be very generally let out upon them after their restitution; but further, though Reprobates may also be spared and reserved in publick calamities, yet the comparison holds, 1. In that the Elect and pardoned ones are the fewer number, as a *remnant* in comparison of the bulk which are cut off. 2. In that a remnant left from trouble, ought in their behaviour to resemble much the godly and elect in sobriety, *Isa.* 38. 15. in needy dependance, *Zeph.* 3. 12. in mourning for sin, *Ezek.* 7. 16. in holy walking, *Zeph.* 3. 13, *&c.*

The second expression is, *He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy*; wherein his great mercy, and his taking pleasure in it, in pardoning sin, is amplified and commended from his putting off justly conceived displeasure against sin and the sinner. *Whence learn*, 1. The Lord will put on just anger against the sins of his people, and may possibly not passe them over at all times, but may testifie his displeasure by effects against them, whom he will yet pardon; for, it is here supposed that he

he may have *anger*, and let it out for a time. 2. The Lord when he is provoked, and teſtifying his diſpleaſure, is not unwilling to be reconciled: for, *he retaines not his anger*; or, as the word ſignifieth, holds it not with a ſtrong hand, but ſeeketh when he is angry, that we ſhould ſtand in the gap, and intreat him to paſſe from it. 3. It highly commendeth God, and is matter of great conſolation to us, that his anger againſt his people is not everlaſting; That *he retains not his anger for ever*, is a mercy, however it may endure for a long tract of time. 4. Gods mercy is the only cauſe wherefore he doth not purſue his controverſies againſt his people with eternal wrath, and this is to be ſeen and acknowledged by all them who are ſo graciouſly dealt with; for, ſo do they here, *He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy*. 5. Albeit God, bleſſed over all, delight in himſelf and all his attributes, and in the manifeſtation of them in the world, yet after the manner of men, he is ſaid *to delight in mercy*, in regard that attribute is moſt manifeſted in the world, in his bounty to all, *Pſal.* 33. 5. in his not taking pleaſure in the death, even of reprobates, *Ezech.* 18. 32. albeit that for the manifeſtation of his juſtice he willeth it; and in that to his own people juſtice is his ſtrange act, *Iſa.* 28. 21. and mercy his ordinary way of dealing, and all the mercy he ſheweth them he doth it not grudgingly, *Jer.* 32. 41. nor doth he delight to be at odds with them, but alwayes to have them refreſhed in his love, and therefore his mercy ends many a plea, that it may make way, and burſt through clouds to manifeſt it ſelfe.

Verſe 19. *He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ſubdue our iniquities, and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea.*

This great priviledge is yet inſiſted in, and further commended and clearcd in ſeveral expreſſions; the firſt is, *He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us*; wherein is declared, not only that the pardon of ſin, and removal of the effects thereof, do flow from the tender mercie of God, but this pardon is commended from an effect of it, that God in mercy will turn to his pardoned people with compaſſion, and from Gods conſtancy herein, that after compaſſion hath been formerly ſhewed and abuſed, he will yet again have compaſſion, as the Hebrew way of ſpeech

is

is often taken and tranſlated. *Whence learn,* 1. Many of our conceptions and expreſſions will not be able to take up, or utter the great goodneſſe of God in pardoning ſin, nor the great mercy a ſelf-condemned ſinner ſeeth in it, nor the great benefit he reaps by it; therefore are expreſſions ſo multiplied about it: 2. Albeit it be a ſweet ſigne of a pardoned man, when he eſteems of a pardon, and of God as a pardoner, and when he loveth God, becauſe he will forgive his own people; yet it addes much to the aſſurance and comfort of this benefit, when every ſelf-condemned ſinner layeth hold on this benefit, and applieth it to himſelfe, which ſhould be endeavoured, and may be attained; for, here the Church cometh to application: *He will have compaſſion upon us.* 3. God is provoked by his peoples ſins to turn away from them, and to ſeem to neglect them, their prayers and conditions; ſo much is imported, in that he is to *turn again* to them. 4. Upon the Lords pardoning of ſinne, not only is anger taken away, (as *v.* 18.) but reconciliation, and the ſhining of his favourable countenance will follow in due time; for, *He will turn again and have compaſſion.* 5. Albeit favours formerly received, and abuſed by us, may be a great impediment to our faith in expecting favour, when we need it again, yet the Lord in mercy will again and again be kinde to his people; for, ſo doth the other interpretation teach: *He will again have compaſſion.* See, *Judg.* 10 11, 12, 13, 14. with 16. 6. Albeit the guilty childe of God, having abuſed former mercies, and lying in his ſinne and miſery, be an unworthy and contemptible object, having nothing wherewith to commend himſelfe to God; yet pity in God will condeſcend to look upon him, and bring an argument from his very miſery to help him; for, *He will have compaſſion upon us,* ſay they. 7. The Lord is ſo far from rejecting his people for their unworthineſſe and miſerable condition, that he will keep them in ſuch a needy condition, as may make them fit objects of his pity; for, in that *He will have compaſſion,* it implieth, that he will keep them in ſuch a needy condition as needs compaſſion. The Church needs not expect to be freed altogether of the badges of her miſery, unleſſe ſhe would baniſh his tender compaſſions out of the world 8. The Lords needy and diſtreſſed people, will get a room in his tender affection, till they be helped, and compaſſion ſhall carve out their ſupply and iſſue; for, ſo much alſo doth his *having compaſſion* teach us.

Another expreſſion clearing this benefit, is, *He will ſubdue*

*our*

*our iniquities*; which may be taken up either as a further explication of the way of pardon, that God overcomes the great provocation of sinne, standing in his mercies way, or as an effect of pardon, that God not only pardons the guilt, but mortifieth the power of sinne in his people. *Whence learn*, 1. The Lord pardons sinne in none, but such as he makes sensible of the great provocation of sinne, and makes them to see it as an army, standing in mercies way, *to be subdued*; for, so do they expresse the way of pardon. 2. Gods mercy is all sufficient to overcome all provocations, and to overcome the ill deserving of sinne; for, *He will subdue iniquity*. See, *Cant* 2. 8. *Rom* 5. 20. 3. Whoever get pardon of sinne, they also fall in love with, and see the need of mortification of sin, this the other interpretation of *subduing* teacheth. The pardoned Church accounteth God singular, because *he will subdue iniquity*. 4. Mortification of sinne is to be wrought by God, and expected from him, otherwise our endeavours will not prevaile, and when our endeavours of mortification availe not, yet our case is not hopelesse; for, *He will subdue our iniquities*.

The last expression, *Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*, containes a further effect of pardon, that sins once pardoned, shall not be remembred nor laid to their charge againe, which is held out in a borrowed speech taken from amongst men; that being without possibility of being recovered by men, which is cast into the bottom of the sea, and that where it is deepest. *Whence learn*, 1. Albeit a pardoned sinner, when he commits new sin, or is not humble, tender or thankful under the sense of pardon, may have former sinnes brought to remembrance, to be matter of humiliation, and stirring up to repentance; and albeit an houre of tentation may shake loose all evidences of pardon, yet sin being once pardoned, the remission stands never to be repeated, only new confirmations are still to be sought after, nor will the pardoned sinne come in account against the pardoned man before God again; for, so much doth this borrowed speech teach. See, *Isa.* 38. 17. *Psal.* 103. 12. *Jer* 31. 34. 2. Gods mercy is so infinite, that multitudes of sin in the self-judging sinner, will not hinder his free and full pardon, nor needs to obstruct to peaceable effects thereof in the conscience of the pardoned man; and this fountain stands daily open for the justified man to flee unto with all his faults as they are committed, with renewing of his faith and repentance; for, so large is this Promise, *Thou wilt*

*cast*

*caſt all their ſins, &c.* 3. As the ſenſe of the pardon of ſin, and freedome from the apprehenſion of Gods keeping it in remembrance, is a warme and refreſhing condition: ſo it would be much entertained, by frequent looking to God by faith and praiſe about it. Therefore yet again is the ſpeech directed to God, *Thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea.*

Verſ. 20. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt ſworn unto our fathers, from the dayes of old.*

In the next place, God is commended as ſingular in his gracious fidelity, keeping the Covenant made with their forefathers. *Doct.* 1. The priviledges of the Church, are made theirs by Contract and ſworn Covenant, and ſo are certain; for, ſo the Word ſpeaks of *truth and mercy ſworn.* 2. The Lord is to be ſeene and commended as incomparable in fidelity and promiſe-keeping, notwithſtanding all impediments in his way, and all our apprehenſions of him to the contrary; for, it is to be repeated, *Who is a God like unto thee, that wilt perform the truth, &c.?* 3. The ſumme of Gods Covenant with his Church is *mercy*, in reſpect of the fountain whence all his bounty floweth, and in reſpect of our ill deſervings which we ſhould daily ſee; and *truth*, in reſpect that the freedome of mercy in promiſing diminiſheth nothing of the certainty of performance: but as *mercy* opens the doore, ſo *truth* keeps it open. Hence it is, that thoſe two are ſo frequently conjoyned in the expectations and deſires of Saints. See, *Pſal.* 57. 3. and 61. 7. 4. The Covenant of mercy is the Churches firſt and irrevocable priviledge; for, it is *ſworn of old*, and ſo the law which came after, cannot diſannul it, *Gal.* 3. 17. 5. As the ſpiritual bleſſings of the Covenant belong only to true believers, who may reckon *Jacob* and *Abraham*, with whom the Covenant was made, their *fathers* according to the faith: ſo even the natural poſterity of *Jacob* and *Abraham* have a peculiar intereſt in that Covenant made with their fathers, not broken off by any interruption or deſolation, but to be ſtill forth-coming for them, as to their being called as a Nation to be his Church and people, if not alſo for giving them the promiſed land in heritage; for, ſo do they reckon while they are threatened with much enſuing deſolation; *Thou wilt perform the truth to Iacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt ſworn,*

*&c.* For this cause the Apostle, *Rom.* 11.29. reckons, that Gods purposes toward them as a Nation, are among *the gifts which are without repentance*, and never to be recalled and made utterly void, more then in his dealing with his Elect, in the matter of their calling and glorification. 6. It is the duty of the godly, when they are called to trouble, to confirm their faith in the hope of issue, according to Gods promise, and be comforted and rest satisfied therewith, accounting it sweet to have hope of future mercy sure, although it were never so long a coming, and the way to it never so rough; for, so do the godly, hearing tell of future desolation, close all, believing and resting satisfied with this: *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, &c.* for the accomplishment whereof every godly man should pray, *Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen and Amen.*

# Nahum.

## THE ARGUMENT.

THE *Lord, having suspended the execution of the judgements denounced by* Jonah *against* Nineveh, *the chief City of the Assyrian Empire upon their repentance; they did again return to their vomit, and added unto all their other sins, the oppppression of the people of God, by captivating the ten tribes, and over-running* Judah: *therefore the Lord, for the comfort of his people thus afflicted, raiseth up* Nahum, (*whether in* Hezekiah's *dayes, or afterward, is not certain, yet certainly that oppression of* Judah, 2 Kings 18. *and* 19. *is pointed at by him*) *to set forth at large the ruine of that Monarchie, especially of the chief City* Nineveh; *and for this end, setting forth a description of God, in his justice, power and mercie, suitable to the present purpose, he foretels the ruine of the State of*

Assyria,

Assyria, *by the* Medes *and* Caldeans, *with the comfort and advantage redounding to the Church thereby*, chap. 1. *and the destruction of the chief City, the preparations against which, with the taking thereof is set down*, chap. 2. *and further amplified and confirmed, by setting forth their provocations, the example of other places, and the fruitlessenesse of all their endeavours to defend themselves*, chap. 3.

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# CHAP. I.

THis Chapter after the Inscription, *ver.* 1. containeth, First, a Description of God in his justice and power against his enemies, *ver.* 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. and mercy toward his people, *ver.* 7. Secondly, in an application of this description to the present purpose; wherein, 1. The Assyrians are threatened with violent and total destruction, *ver.* 8. notwithstanding their insolent presumption, in thinking to be able to wrong the Church, or defend themselves, *ver.* 9. or their formidable union and their prosperity, which God would make use of to bring on their stroak, *ver.* 10. 2. The cause of all this is declared to be their injurious dealing against God and his people, *ver.* 11. for which they are again threatened, that so he may comfort his Church with deliverance from their oppressions, *ver.* 12, 13. 3 To confirme this sentence yet more, *Assyria*, or the royal family is again threatened with utter rooting out, *ver.* 14. the newes whereof should produce comfort to the Church, having liberty thereby to enjoy and go about the ordinances, *ver.* 15.

Vers. 1. *THe burden of Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkothite.*

The Inscription holds forth, 1. The Penman of this Prophecie described from his name, and the place of his birth, of both which we read no more elsewhere. 2. The nature of the message, containing hard tidings against the chief City of the Assyrian Empire (called *Nineveh*, or *the habitation of Ninus*) under which the Empire it self is to be understood. 3. The au-

thority and certainty of this message, in that he had it by vision. *Whence learn*, 1. Even enemies to the Church, are under the dominion of Gods Providence, and liable to his rebukes and corrections; for, he hath a *burden* against *Nineveh*. 2. There is nothing to be expected from God to impenitent sinners, or such as seeming to repent, continue not in that exercise, but return to their vomit, but hard tidings; for, *Nineveh*, forgetting to continue in that exercise which they began at *Jonahs* preaching, get now from the Lord *a burden*. 3. Judgements denounced by God against the wicked for sin, are insupportable and crushing, such as the creature cannot stand under: therefore are they called *a burden*. 4. Wrath denounced against impenitent sinners, is infallible and certain, whatever may appear to those who judge by appearance; for, *This burden* is *the book of the vision*, containing what God had certainly revealed to his servant, and commanded him to publish in his Name and Authority. 5. As *Nahum* saw this by vision, so they would studie to be near God, who would see the ruine of flourishing enemies, and get it believed from the Word.

**Vers. 2.** ***God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth: the LORD revengeth, and is furious, the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.***

The justice of God, taking vengeance on his enemies, is described from the cause moving him to it, which is his jealousie, or tender feeling of the injuries done to his honour and dear people; and from the severity and certainty thereof, though suspended for a time. *Doct.* 1 As the Lord is jealous of his peoples affections towards him, *Exod.* 20. 5. so is he jealous and cannot endure the wrong done to his honour in hurting his people who are dear to him: for, *God is jealous*. 2. This jealousie and affection of God, will in due time break out in just revenge against his and the Churches enemies, recompencing the wrongs they do, which his people cannot take course with: for, *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth*. 3. Vengeance executed by God, jealous for his people whom he loveth, floweth from great displeasure, and is most severe: for, *the Lord revengeth* all injuries, *and is furious*. The Hebrew word imports great fury, as of one (so to say, with reverence to him who speaks so to our capacity,) transf-

transported with it. 4 The justice and severity of God against wicked men, would be seriously studied, both by enemies to deterre them from doing evil, and by his oppressed people for their comfort; for, this repetition, *The Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance*, imports, that there should be many thoughts of it. 5. The Lord ownes his peoples quarrell, and declareth himself a Party against their enemies; for, they are *his adversaries* and *his enemies*. 6 That wrath which the Lords Word denounceth against the wicked, and which their wickednesse calls aloud for, and yet is kept off, is but only reserved for a more fit time, to be poured forth in greater measure; for, *He reserveth wrath for his enemies*. The Original hath it only *reserveth*, without any addition, which sheweth how inexpressible that anger is, which God treasureth up to be poured out together.

Ver. 3. *The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit* the wicked: *the LORD* hath *his way in the whirlewinde, and in the storme, and the clouds* are *the dust of his feet.*

This justice of God taking vengeance on enemies, is further described from the way of manifesting thereof, which is slowly, but certainly; the Lord forbearing, neither because he purposeth to forgive, nor because he wants power; as may appear from his Majesty and State, when he appeareth environed with whirlewindes and tempests raised by his power, as, *Psal.* 18. 8,---11. and the airie clouds being as dust, raised by his stately progresse, as armies raise dust in their march: and this is one part of the description of his power, for executing this just vengeance. *Doct.* 1. The Lord, even toward enemies is long-suffering, and slow in executing of anger, that their destruction may be seen to be of themselves, that in his holy providence they may stumble more upon his indulgence, and fill up their measure, and that his Churches faith and patience may be tried; Therefore, saith he, *The Lord is slow to anger.* 2. When the Lord spareth his enemies, it is not because he is not able to meet with them, nor ought we to judge because of any outward appearances, that they are invincible; for, how unlikely soever the destruction of enemies may be in the eyes of men, *yet the Lord*, who is *slow to anger*, is also *great in power*. 3. As the Lord is able to reach his

enemies when he pleaseth, so his forbearing of them, is no evidence that they shall be exempted altogether; but he will undoubtedly give proof of his power in dealing with them as their way deserveth; for, *the Lord is great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.* He will punish them, lest his sparing them altogether should give ground to any to think that he *held them innocent*, or *absolved them as guiltlesse*, as the word signifies. 4. The Lord is able by his power speedily to bring to passe greatest things, and can, when he pleaseth, overturn, confound & darken all things, which appeared to be stable, well ordered and clear; for, so much doth *his way in the whirlwind, storm and clouds* teach. These suddenly confound what they surprize, and clouds and stormes do darken the face of a clear skie, and Gods way in these points at the suddennesse thereof, *Prov.* 10. 25. *Isa.* 19. 1. 5. The Lord manifesting himself in his great glory doth but, so to say, obscure himself in respect of our infirmity, which cannot comprehend his glory in its brightnesse, for so much doth his manifestation of himself environed with dark *stormes*, or *tempests*, and thick lowring *clouds* teach. See, *Psal.* 97. 2. 6. Gods dispensations even when they are most dreadfull and terrible in effects, may yet be deep and unsearchable, and his purpose and counsell in them hard to discern; for so much further doth *his way in whirlwindes, stormes and clouds*, (which involve and darken all) teach.

Ver. 4. *He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it drie, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.*

5. *The mountaines quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

This power of God is yet further described from the effects thereof, that he can in his anger drie up seas and rivers, as of old appeared at the red-sea and *Jordan*; he can blast the beauty of fertile and pleasant places, such as *Lebanon* for trees, *Bashan* for pasture, and *Carmel* for corn; he can make the stable hills to quake and melt like wax or snow; the earth to burn up with drought, or as *Sodome* was destroyed, yea, and can dissolve all the creatures, and make the habitable world feel the effects

of

of his power: from all which *Learn*, 1. The power of God is much to be ſtudied by all thoſe who oppoſe him, and by them who expect help from him in trouble; therefore this ample deſcription of his power is recorded. 2. Whatever men do conceit of themſelves, yet it is no ſmall task to give God the glory of omnipotency, and fix faith upon him, as able to do whatſoever he pleaſeth; for, this commendation of his power is no vain repetition, but importeth that neither do enemies fear it, nor his people truſt it as they ought. 3. The Lord doth give ſuch ample proofs of his power in his works of providence upon the creatures in heaven and earth, as may clearly confirm us in the faith of his omnipotency, which are therefore to be ſtudied, that we may be confirmed; this is held forth in what he doth dailyin the air in *ſtormes* and *clouds*, *v.* 3. and in what he can do upon *ſeas*, *rivers*, *hills*, *&c.* whereof ample proof hath been given, as is recorded in Scripture. 4. All the creatures are ſubject to the power of God, to be diſpoſed of, and their ordinary courſe to be overturned at his pleaſure; for, *he makes ſeas and rivers dry*, makes fruits to wither, hills and earth to melt and burn, and the world to be turned upſide-down.

Ver. 6. *Who can ſtand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceneſſe of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.*

From the former evidences of Gods power upon the creatures, the Propher inferreth the inability of any to ſtand or endure when an angry God calleth them before his tribunal; and that becauſe his anger being attended with invincible power, would as a fire burn up all before it without mercy, and can overturn hard rocks, as at Chriſts death, and 1. *Kings.* 19. 11. *Doct.* 1. The Lords indignation againſt ſin, would be looked upon as attended with divine Omnipotency, able to make the creature feel it ſadly; for, ſo doth this dependence teach. See, *Pſal.* 90. 11. 2. No attribute in God, how dreadfull ſoever, is formidable to any but to the man who provokes him to anger, and continueth therein without repentance. Therefore is his dreadfull power held forth as a ground to this concluſion, *Who can ſtand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceneſſe of his anger?* 3. It is but mad preſumption in wicked men, to think to decline Gods judge-

ment-seat, or to keep their seet when he is angry; for God will draw them to his tribunal, and having rebuked and condemned them, will cast them out of his presence, and destroy them in his fierce displeasure; for, *who can stand before his indignation, &c.* 4. When Gods anger is rightly considered, when the effects thereof upon the creatures are seen, and when man becometh well acquainted with his own weakneſſe, he will easily see the folly of standing out against God; for, *his fury is poured out like fire* (upon combustible matter; such as man is before him) *and the rocks are thrown down by him*, how much more weak man?

Ver. 7. *The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Followeth a description of God in his mercy, that he is good and meek a defence in trouble, and an approver of, and carer for such as are his people and trust in him: and as the former description of his power and justice was verified upon the *Assyrians*, so this hath relation to the behaviour and successe of *Hezekiah* and *Judah*, who trusting in God, 2 *Kings* 18. 5. 2 *Chron.* 32. 8. were protected and delivered. *Doct.* 1. The people of God ought to be such, as fleeing out of themselves, and renouncing all trust in humane helps and confidences, do make God their onely refuge both against sin and trouble; for, so doth the word rendered *trusting* import, they *trust in him*. 2. The Lord in his greatest majesty and terribleneſſe, is still good and favourable to such as trust in him; for after the description of his power and justice, is subjoyned, *The Lord is good.* See, *Mat.* 28. 4, 5. 3. The people of God ought to resolve for times of trouble and strait, which yet is without any prejudice to the goodneſſe of God toward them, as being sent to do them good, and to their advantage; for, *the Lord is good*, and yet it is implied that there will be *the day of trouble*, and but a *day*, not an eternity of it. 4. The power of God which is imployed against enemies, is forthcoming for the comfort of his people in their need; for, thereby is he *a strong hold*, or, *strength*. 5. The Lords goodneſſe, his protection and defence is best known and discerned in times of difficulty; for, *the Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble.* His peoples wanting of difficulties would take away the sense of what he is to them and for them, *Psal.* 31. 7. 6. The

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Lord not onely as omniſcient knoweth, but doth approve and hath a care of ſuch as lean to him. and give him the glory of his attributes, by believing; for, *he knoweth them that truſt in him.*

Ver. 8. *But with an over-running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkneſſe ſhall purſue his enemies.*

The Prophet proceeds to apply this deſcription of God to the preſent purpoſe, and in oppoſition to this his goodneſſe, his ſeverity againſt the *Aſſyrians* is held forth, comprehending the ſum of all the threatening, that the City or Empire ſhall be ſo ſuddenly and violently overthrown, as if a deluge had ſwept it away, and in that any who eſcape that ſtorm, ſhall be purſued and cut off with judgements. *Doct.* 1. The people of God ought to learn to eſteem highly of their ſafety in him, by conſidering the woefull caſe of ſuch as are without him; therefore is this calamity ſet in oppoſition to their ſafety, that they may ſtand as it were upon the bridge of this deluge, and ſeeing the wicked periſh, may rejoyce in him who is become their ſalvation; *The Lord is good, &c. But with an over-running flood he will make an utter end, &c.* 2. The judgements of an angry God are as irreſiſtible, and make as great havock of perſons or places, as if an inundation or deluge brake in upon a land; ſo doth this ſimilitude import, *with an over running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, to wit, of *Nineveh*, or the *Aſſyrian* Empire; it ſhould be ſo deſtroyed and ſwept away, as the place where the city ſtood ſhould bear no monument thereof, nor ſhould there be any face of the Empire. This form of ſpeech doth frequently point out totall extirpation, *Pſal* 37. 10. *Dan.* 2. 35. *Rev.* 12. 8. 3. There is no poſſibility for man to ſhun the righteous judgements of the Lord; nor can exemption in horrideſt calamities ſecure a ſinner from other plagues; for, though they eſcape the deluge, or think to flee, yet *darkneſſe ſhall purſue his enemies.* 4. The portion of Gods enemies is to be cut off and ſent out of the world in affliction, ignominy and terrour, and afterward to be ſent to the pit; for, ſo much doth darkneſſe import. See, *Job* 10. 21, 22. *Jer.* 13. 16. *Matth.* 8. 12. *darkneſſe ſhall purſue his enemies*, and where he purſues he will overtake.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 9. *What do ye imagine against the* LORD? *he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time.*

This sentence is confirmed in that their enterprises against the Church would be so far from taking effect, and their projects to uphold themselves, and their Monarchy stand in so little stead, that he should totally ruine and cut them off, so that there should be nothing left for a second stroak to hit upon. *Doct.* 1. It is a presumptuous and vain course for men to plot and enterprise evil against the Church of God, considering that this is to oppose themselves against God, and to draw speedy destruction upon themselves from him, which will marre their project; for, *what do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end*, saith he to the *Assyrians* plotting the Churches destruction. 2. All humane endeavours to keep off judgements will prove vain, when God is a party and about to punish for sin; for, so much also are we to understand in this place, by *imagining against the Lord*; which he contemnes, and judges as foolish thoughts, to think to be de ivered thereby; *What do ye imagine against the Lord?* See, *Prov.* 21. 30. 3. However the Lord spare wicked States, when his own Church is often troubled, yet when their cup is full, he will once for all pay them home with totall ruine; for, *he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time.*

Ver. 10. *For while they be folded together* as *thorns, and while they are drunken together* as *drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.*

A further confirmation of this sentence, and of the certainty and compleatnesse of their calamity, is held forth in a threefold similitude. 1. Of thornes folded togethar, which while one cannot separate, he casts into the fire, and so all do easily burn. 2. Of drunken men, who are easily overcome and slain. 3. Of stubble fully dry, which easily takes fire: whereby also they are taught the vanity of all they had to oppose against Gods stroak; for, whereas they confided in their numbers, union and terrible-

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neſſe (as thornes folded together, and pricking on all hands, may ſignifie) they ſhould indeed prove a fit bundle for the fire, and be perplexed in their own counſells, that they may run on deſtruction; and whereas they confided in their pleaſures, they ſhould be infatuated thereby, and prove as drunken men, ready to hurt themſelves, and fit to be ſlain by others; and their ſunſhine of proſperity ſhould but dry them as fuell for the fire. *Doct.* 1. God can make uſe of ſuch things as men conceive to be their advantages, for to procure their ruine, and blaſt all of them; for, ſo do theſe ſimilitudes, before explained, teach us: God can turn their confided in union and terribleneſſe into perplexity and totall deſtruction, as *thornes folded together* are fit to be caſt into the fire. 2. Abuſed pleaſures and proſperity do ripen the abuſers, and fit them for judgement; while as their hearts being effeminate therewith, cannot (in Gods juſt judgement upon them) ſtand out againſt any blaſt of trouble; and withall trouble comes from God unexpectedly upon ſuch, while they are taken up with the noiſe of their delights; for, *while they are drunken as drunkards*, who have not their wits about them, *they ſhall be devoured*. 3. There is as little ability in ſinfull man to ſtand out againſt the juſt vengeance of God, as in drie ſtubble to reſiſt the fire, that it ſhould not kindle in it and burn it; for, though they be both *folded together*, and *drunken* with pleaſure, yet that ſhall not ſo much as make them endure trouble, as thornes do the fire, but yet more, *they ſhall be devoured as ſtubble fully dry*.

Ver. 11. *There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil againſt the* LORD: *a wicked counſellour*.

Followeth the Lords controverſie, and cauſe of this calamity, which was the injuries done by *Senacherib*: (not excluding others of their Kings before) who purpoſed and plotted the ruine of the Church, and by his ſervant *Rabſhakeh* uttered blaſphemy againſt God, and counſelled his people to quit their confidence, and yeeld to him. See, 2. *King.* 18. 2 *Chron.* 32. *Iſay.* 36 This verſe makes it clear, that the threatenings in this chapter are not chiefly directed againſt *Senacherib* and his army, (though it may ſometimes be hinted at as a preſage of great ruine) but againſt the Aſſyrian Empire; for *Sennacherib* is *one come out of thee*, that is, *out of Aſſyria* or, *Nineveh*, who are here threatened. *Doct.* 1. Injuries done unto Gods people do bring moſt

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speedy and total ruine upon any State; for, such was the quarrel here, *imagining evil against the Lord*. 2. Wicked governours and rulers do draw on speedy calamities on such as they rule over, and lead in wrong courses; for, *Assyria* and *Nineveh* are to be cut off, because *there is one come out of thee, &c.* 3. When the Lords people are wronged, he will still appear in the quarrel, and resent the injury as done to himself, his people being under his protection, and the design tending to deprive him of a people and of a throne in the Church; therefore all their enterprises are expounded to be *imagining evil against the Lord*. See, *Zech.* 12.8. 4 The Lord doth observe and will severely punish the wicked projects and machinations of enemies, whatever effect he in his providence permit them to have; for, it is laid to their charge, that *there is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellour*, albeit he get no leave to execute all his purpose. See, *Psal.* 21.11. 5 It is a wicked imagination in men, that leads them to blaspheme God, in denying his power and providence, and mocking of his peoples confidence in him, or to think that this is the way to prosper: and it is a wicked counsel to perswade Gods people to renounce their confidence, and renounce the way of his worship, that it may be well with them; the authors of all which God will not suffer to go unpunished; for, thus also did *Sennacherib* and *Rabshakeh imagine evil against the Lord*, and prove *a wicked counsellour*, as the sacred History relates, and for this is *Assyria* threatened. 6. It is the character of one indeed desperate, and a never-do-well, who dares enter the lists in opposition to God, by plotting against his glory and people; for, he is *a wicked counsellour*, or *a counsellour of Belial*, that is, not only one who having cast off all yokes, and awe of God, hath fallen upon such devilish plots, but one who will never do well, as the word signifies.

Ver. 12. *Thus saith the LORD, Though they* be *quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall passe thorough: though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.*

13. *For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.*

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Upon the back of this challenge they are again threatened with deſtruction, notwithſtanding of their quiet and ſecure condition, or of their confidence in their great multitudes: and this ſentence is further amplified from Gods end in it, which is to comfort his Church in *Judah*, that had been afflicted by the Aſſyrians, to whom he promiſeth that ſhe ſhould no more be ſmitten with that rod, but that by the deſtruction of *Aſſyria*, ſhe ſhould be delivered from that ſlavery and bondage, under which ſhe had been held by them. *Doct.* 1. As proſperity makes a people uſually fat and rank, ſo doth their waxing groſſe call for ſtroaks: for, they being *quiet*, became *likewiſe many*, and therefore *ſhall be cut down* or *ſhorne*; while the Prophet ſaith, *Thus ſhall they be cut down* or *ſhorne*, he either hath in delivering this meſſage, uſed ſome geſture, repreſenting the way of cutting down or mowing; or, he alludeth to the ſignification of the word *cutting down*, which is uſed of cutting down rank graſſe, wool or haire, by ſharpened inſtruments, ſo ſignifying the cutting ſhort their flouriſhing and luxuriant condition; or, the word tranſlated *thus*, may be rendered *likewiſe*, as it is immediately before, and ſo it imports, that as they had taſted of peace, and likewiſe of multiplication: ſo ſhould they alſo finde *cutting down*; or, it may be rendered *certainly*, as it is frequently uſed in Scripture. 2. Nothing the creature can enjoy is able to hold off Gods ſtroak, nor needs he any time to ruine his enemies, but can do it with one ſudden ſtroak; for, *though they be quiet* (free of trouble, and ſecure in their fortifications) *yet ſhall they be cut down*, and that *when he ſhall paſſe through*: or, with a ſudden ſtroak, alluding to the ſtroak on *Sennacheribs* Army. 3. This repetition of the ſentence teacheth, how hard a thing it is to get threatened judgments believed in a proſperous condition; therefore the Lord doth again undertake it, whatever they had to oppoſe, And teacheth, that it is uſeful for the Church to look on injuries done to her, as a ſufficient quarrel to bring judgements on her perſecutors; for, therefore after that challenge, *v.* 11. the ſentence is again repeated. 4. The Lord would have his Church obſerving the kindneſſe ſhewed to her, and the benefits that redound to her by his judgements on the world, therefore doth he direct the ſpeech to her, that ſhe may obſerve it. *Though I have afflicted thee, &c.* 5. The Lord takes with the ſtile of being the afflicter of his people, whoever be the inſtruments, and would be ſeen of them to be ſo, therefore, ſaith he, *I have afflicted thee.* See, *Iſa.* 10, 5. 6. Albeit

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the Church of God will never get an end put to her afflictions, until eternity come, when God ſhall wipe away all tears from her eyes; yet ought ſhe to acknowledge the Lords great mercy, in cutting off her preſent enemies, and giving a breathing time; for, ſo muſt this promiſe, *I will afflict thee no more*, be underſtood in this place, with relation to the preſent enemy, that the Church ſhould be free of their trouble, and enjoy a little reſt. 7. The Lords former ſharp dealing ought to be no obſtacle to our faith in expecting of good things; for, he can eaſily, when he will, change his dealing: *Though I have afflicted thee*, ſaith he, *I will afflict thee no more.* 8. As the Lord ſeeth it fitting, at ſome times to humble his Church, by bringing her into bondage; ſo he eaſily can, and in due time will ſet her at freedome; therefore, ſaith he, *Now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burſt thy bond in ſunder.*

Verſ. 14. *And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee,* that *no more of thy name be ſowen: out of the houſe of thy gods will I cut off the graven image, and the molten image: I will make thy grave, for thou art vile.*

Albeit it be true, that *Sennacheribs* glory was ſtained by that diſcomfiture received in *Judah*, *Iſ.* 37. 36. and he was ſhortly after killed in the houſe of his gods, *Iſ.* 37. 38. whereby that temple was polluted from being the habitation of their idols, where the King was ſlain, and (belike) buried, yet this cannot exhauſt this full threatening, ſeeing his ſon reigned in his ſtead, *Iſa.* 37. 38. and ſo his name was yet ſowen, and therefore the threatening is to be looked on, as reaching the whole Empire of *Aſſyria*, the final and irreparable ruine whereof is yet divers ways pointed out, 1. By having *no more of their name ſowen*, whereby we are given to underſtand, that their very memory ſhould be quite cut off, and the dreadful report which went of them among other Nations quite forgotten, and ſo their *cutting down*, *v.* 12. ſhould differ from the condition of graſſe, or other things which grow up again after they are cut down, and of corn which is yearly ſowen after cutting down. 2. By deſtroying of their idols and ſuppoſed ſacred things, which is another ſigne of total ruine of an idolatrous land continuing ſo ſtill, when the ſtroak reacheth even to theſe. 3. By burying of them, and putting them

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off the face of the earth, as being vile and ſtinking above ground, which ſeems to have begun, after that overthrow of their army in *Judah*. *Doct.* 1. Such is the preſumption of wicked men, and the heartleſſe diffidence of Gods people, that Gods ſentence againſt his enemies is hardly received and credited: for, this frequent repetition ſheweth, that this truth is not eaſily inculcated. 2. It is ſufficient ground of aſſurance for the coming to paſſe of greateſt things, that the Lord hath determined they ſhould be; for, this is given as a ſure ground of *Aſſyria*'s ruine, that *the Lord hath given a Commandment concerning thee*, or purpoſed their deſtruction, his purpoſe concluding as effectually the concurring of all means to bring it about, as if they were eſpecially commanded. 3. The Lord doth juſtly root out the memory of ſuch perſons or States, as make it their only work to get a name on earth, and to be eminent and terrible; for, ſuch is *Aſſyria*'s doom: *No more of thy name ſhall be ſowen.* 4. The threatening of the deſtruction of idols, as a ſigne of total ruine, ſhould put us in minde of the Lords great controverſie againſt idolatry and idols, in that he will ruine the worſhippers thereof, to ruine them: as alſo, if the cutting off of their idols was a ſigne of utter deſtruction, how much more ought it to be grievous unto us, beyond any of our particular loſſes, when our God in his honour and houſe is wronged, and how ſad a preſage is it of a ſad ſtroak, when God doth not ſpare his own intereſts in a land? all this we may gather from this ſentence, *Out of the houſe of thy gods will I cut off the graven image, and the molten image.* 5. God can make the greateſt and moſt formidable Nations contemptible, not only before him by their vices, but in the view of all the world, by affronts put upon them by Providence: and ſo cut them off from the face of the earth, as unworthy and unfit to live upon it; for, ſo doth this ſentence, *I will make thy grave, for thou art vile*, import.

Verſe 15. *Behold, upon the mountaines the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, O Judah, keep thy ſolemn feaſts, perform thy vowes: for the wicked ſhall no more paſſe thorow thee, he is utterly cut off.*

However a paſſage like unto this, *Iſa.* 52 7. be applied unto the

the Gospel, *Rom.* 10. 15. (Christ, promised in the Gospel, being the foundation of all the Churches deliverances, and these glad tidings and deliverances, being but shadowes of the glad tidings of the Gospel, and of the salvation therein held forth:) yet the proper drift of this place is, to shew the effects which the destruction of the Assyrians should produce in the Church of *Judah*, now only left, who hearing these tidings proclaimed openly, as upon the mountaines, should rejoyce in them as glad tidings, and tidings of peace: and should without disturbance keep their solemnities, and praise God, their enemies, who disquieted and interrupted them, being now cut off: A notable proof of all which they had, when as *Sennacheribs* army, who made havock of *Judah*, and shut up *Jerusalem* was overthrown. *Doct.* 1. The Lord will refresh his Church, who hath received the glad tidings of salvation, with glad tidings of his appearing and doing for her in difficulties; for, there are here *good tidings*, and *peace published* openly *upon the mountaines*. 2. The report of the Lords doing for his people, ought to be seriously considered by them, and they to be affected therewith; *Behold, upon the mountains, &c.* saith he. 3. It is the Churches sorest affliction to be deprived of the free use of the Ordinances of God, and the enjoyment of them her greatest mercy: for, so is implied in the Command now to keep *thy solemn feasts*, (which before she could not) as the great mercy in her deliverance. 4. The want of publick Ordinances, and the solemnities of worship is a bitter trial, however it may fare well with the people of God, in their private exercises of Religion, and in their inward conditions; for, so is also imported in that *Judah* may *keep solemn feasts*. 5. Our estimation of, and respect unto the Ordinances of God, must be evidenced by our great alacrity in going about them, (especially after we have been deprived of them for a time;) and by our endeavoured thankfulnesse to God for the enjoying of them; for, this speech, *O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts*, is a stirring up to alacrity, and the Command, *Perform thy vowes*, imports a sensible obligation to thankfulnesse to God for the restoring of the Ordinances. 6. The Lord will cut off such sons of *Belial*, as do molest his people in the free use of his Ordinances, be they never so potent; for, so is assured of the Assyrians; *for the wicked*, or, *Belial shall passe no more through thee, he is utterly cut off*: And this sentence stands still in force to be executed in due time, upon all those who do trace the Assyrians footsteps, and imitate their sins.

CHAP.

# CHAP. II.

THis Chapter containes a lively description of the destruction of *Nineveh*, wherein is set forth the preparations for the siege, which they might in reason now expect, *ver.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. the taking away of the City, *v.* 6. with the captivity of the Queen, *v.* 7. the flight of the inhabitants and defendants, *v.* 8. the sacking of the City, and the terrour, confusion and sorrow that shall be amongst all, *v.* 9, 10. All which is amplified from the cause of this stroak, which is insinuated in the admiration and insulting of such as see or hear of their ruine, *ver.* 11, 12. and expressely declared by the Lord, who owns all this that is come upon her, as his act punishing her sin, *v.* 13.

Verse 1. *HE that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make* thy *loines strong, fortifie* thy *power mightily.*

The preparations against *Nineveh* are set down in general, that the *Medes*, and *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the *Caldeans*, who use to crush all they set upon, are to assault her also, whom she shall not be able to resist, though she use all means for defence. And therefore the enemy is spoken of, as if he were already in sight of the City, and she is exhorted by way of derision to prepare her self, by keeping her walls, sending out her Scouts to observe the enemies approach, and by encouraging and strengthening her self all the wayes she could. *Doct.* 1. The Lord can make a Nation formidable, so long as he hath service for them, who, when their own cup is filled, become also feeble; for, the enemies by reason of former successes, appear unto the Assyrians, as *he that dasheth in pieces*, or, *the hammer*, Jer. 50. 23. and yet they were afterwards brought down. 2. When God sends a prospering enemie against a wicked people, it is, that it may contribute and adde to that terrour of God wherewith he

will confound them in their trouble; for, therefore are the enemies named here, *He that daſheth in pieces*, to ſtrike *Nineveh* with terrour. 3. Albeit ſecure ſinners put the evil day farre off, yet ſuch as know the minde of God may ſee it, as if it were preſent, and ſinners themſelves will at laſt finde it ſo; therefore ſaith the Prophet, *He that daſheth in pieces is come up before thy face*, becauſe he ſaw it ſo from God, and they ſhould finde it ſo. 4. Wicked men are not ſoon ſenſible of the hand of God againſt them, but may think to bear out againſt the trouble, which is ſent to deſtroy them; for, ſo doth *Nineveh* prepare, as if ſhe would ſtand it out. 5. The moſt prudent and courageous preparations of men, are but matter of deriſion, when God hath a quarrel, and they will prove but fools in truſting in them: for, theſe exhortations, *Keep the munition, watch the way, &c.* are ſpoken by way of holy deriſion, ſhewing that the utmoſt of their endeavours ſhould not avail them.

Verſ. 2. *For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Iſrael, for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine-branches.*

A reaſon is given why *Nineveh* might expect that the Lord would now come againſt her, though before ſhe had been by his permiſſion proſperous; to wit, that the Lord had by the Aſſyrians, as his ſcourge, chaſtiſed *Judah* (for ſo much ſeems to be underſtood by *Jacob*, as diſtinguiſhed from *Iſrael,*) as well as the ten tribes, and overturned and trod under foot their proud gloriation in their excellencies; the one being totally depopulated and emptied by them, and the other deformed by the taking and ſacking of their towns and villages, which were as branches ſprung out of *Jeruſalem* the mother-City; and therefore he would not ſpare *Nineveh*, but it was now time to take courſe with them, and caſt the rod into the fire. *Doct.* 1. The Lord hath an eſpecial quarrel at the pride of his people, which ariſeth from the conſideration of their excellencies or priviledges, and will have it ſtained; for, *The Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Iſrael*, and ſo ſpares it in none: and the ſame word ſignifying both *excellency* and *pride*, ſheweth, that as priviledges and conceiting of them, go often together; ſo the Lord abhorreth ſuch conceit moſt of a-

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ny. 2. No leſſe oftentimes will ſerve to ſtain pride, and bring down the conceit of a people priviledged by God, then almoſt total deſtruction; for in turning away their excellency, *The empriers have emptied them out, and marred their vine-branches*: 3. The Lord ſo much abhorreth the pride of his people, that he will tolerate even a blaſphemous enemy, till they have been inſtrumental in bringing it down; therefore, *Nineveh* is not medled with, till by them *the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, &c.* See, *Iſa.* 10. 11, 12. 4. The Church being humbled, and her vain-glory laid low before the Lord, he will then take order with ſuch as have been inſtruments of her affliction: therefore, this is a reaſon of the enemies coming againſt *Nineveh*; for, *The Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, &c.* The Churches ſins, unmortified by the rod, are the ſafeguard of enemies, and the reaſon why they are ſo long preſerved.

Verſ. 3. *The ſhield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in ſcarlet: the charets* ſhall be *with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the firre-trees ſhall be terribly ſhaken.*

4. *The charets ſhall rage in the ſtreets, they ſhall juſtle one againſt another in the broad wayes, they ſhall ſeem like torches, they ſhall run like the lightnings.*

5. *He ſhall recount his Worthies, they ſhall ſtumble in their work, they ſhall make haſte to the wall thereof, and the defence thereof ſhall be prepared.*

The army of the Caldeans, and their preparations and actions againſt *Nineveh*, are more particularly deſcribed, 1. That the armour and cloathing chiefly of their Leaders, were red and bloody-coloured, to terrifie others, and hide their own wounds and blood, that the ſight thereof might not encourage the enemies, nor make themſelves to faint. 2. That their chariots both in preparations and aſſaults, for celerity, numerouſneſſe, and becauſe of the fierce diſpoſition of ſuch as manage them, ſhould rage, juſtle and march nimbly as torches and lightnings, the iron of their wheeles ſtriking fire on the ſtreets. 3. That their lances, which were ſo many, as if a wood of firre-trees,

were divided amongſt them, ſhould be ſhaken and managed to the terrour of the Aſſyrians. 4. That the Caldean King, encouraging his Leaders, and calling them by their names, they ſhall ſtumble for haſte to be at the wall to aſſault it, and ſhall ſet up defences under which they may fight with leſſe hazard; from all which *Learn*, 1. To adore the infinite Providence of God, who giveth by his Prophet an exact and particular account of every circumſtance in this action, as if it were already done, intimating, that his purpoſes, effectual providence and foreknowledge, do condeſcend even to particular circumſtances of actions. 2. This large deſcription of their cloaths, garments, activity, &c. teacheth, how terrible thoſe are, who are employed to execute the Lords vengeance and controverſie, how ſtrong they are on whoſe ſide he is, and how formidable to thoſe whom he is to deſtroy. 3. If natural men, for their own ends of ambition and vain glory, may be made ſo reſolute, as to run ſwiftly on hazards, and care nothing for death or wounds, as here is declared, how much more ought the Lords people to be reſolute and couragious in reſiſting to blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, and in acting for God in their places and ſtations? 4. The practice of theſe men in *preparing the defence* under which they might fight, teacheth, that it is not true valour, even in natures eyes, nor warrantable, to run ſo deſperately on hazards, as to neglect any lawful meanes of ſelf-defence.

## Verſ. 6. *The gates of the rivers ſhall be opened, and the palace ſhall be diſſolved.*

Followeth the way of taking the City, by the inundation of the river *Tygris*, on which it ſtood, whereby the wall being broken down, way was made for the enemie to enter as at gates, and the ſtately buildings, or royal Palace was carried away by the flood, or diſſolved and deſtroyed by the enemies. *Tygris* is here called *rivers*, either by way of excellency above many rivers, or becauſe it grew then as big as many rivers. *Doct.* 1. The Lord will ſo make uſe of mens courage in doing of his work, as that his own immediate hand and judgement may be ſeen; for, he will have the river made great by his hand, to make way for the enemies entry and victory, that ſo it might be ſeene not to be their hand only: *The gates of the rivers ſhall be opened.* 2. The Lords immediate hand is ſeen in prevailing againſt his ene-

enemies, where they think themſelves moſt ſecure: for, ſo way was made to enter *Nineveh* by the river, where it ſeemed moſt impregnable, and where, it ſeems, their Palace was built: *The gates of the rivers ſhall be opened.* As nothing will prove weak which God employeth, ſo nothing proves ſtrong where he is a party. 3. Divine vengeance can ſtrike Kings and wicked Rulers, not only with judgments abroad, on armies or ſubjects; but can purſue them to their very Palaces, and pull them down upon their heads; for, *The Palace ſhall be diſſolved.*

Verſ. 7. *And Huzzab ſhall be led away captive, ſhe ſhall be brought up, and her maids ſhall lead* her, *as with the voice of doves, tabring upon their breaſts.*

To omit the various Interpretations of this verſe, I conceive it moſt clear to expound it of the Queen, (or, generally of the great Ladies,) who living before quietly and delicately, in an eſtabliſhed or ſetled condition, as the word *Huzzab* ſignifieth, ſhall now be found out, and pulled away to go into captivity, accompanied with her maids, who having been with her in pleaſure; ſhall now condole with her, and lament her and their own miſeries. And this is the firſt effect of the taking of the City. *Whence learn,* 1. The moſt delicate and weak, and ſuch as have not been accuſtomed to hardſhips, may look for a change when they provoke God, how ſtable ſoever their proſperity ſeem to be; for, *Huzzab ſhall be led away captive,* or *diſcovered,* and *ſpoiled, and made bare,* as the word alſo ſignifieth, and it may be ſhe was handled ſo. See, *Deut.* 28, 56, 57. *Lam.* 4. 5. 2. As giving of ones ſelf to much delicacie, contributes to embitter afflictions unto them; ſo ſuch as have been companions in pleaſure, may contribute to ſet an edge on anothers grief; for, ſo are we taught by the example of this mournful company, brought out of pleaſure to miſery, and *her maids leading her, tabring on their breaſts* for ſorrow, do help to ſet before her the bitterneſſe of her condition. 3. It is an addition to common calamities, that the afflicted muſt ſmother their grief, and dare not vent it openly, for fear of further injuries from enemies, therefore albeit women uſe moſt violently to expreſſe their ſorrowes, yet *her maids lead her as with the voice of doves,* which is a ſecret groaning and bemoaning, not daring to do it openly.

Verſe 8. *But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water; yet they ſhall flee away. Stand, ſtand,* ſhall they cry, *but none ſhall look back.*

Another effect of the taking of *Nineveh* is, the flight of the inhabitants and defendants; which is amplified from her former condition; that, albeit ſhe had been of a long time, or ſince ſhe had a being, populous, rich, and at eaſe, not ſtirred with commotions, as a pond of ſtanding water, abounding with fiſh; yet at the enemies entry, ſhe ſhould be troubled and forſaken, and men ſhould for no intreaty ſtand to it. *Doct.* 1. Gods former ſparing of a people, or their quiet proſperity, and numbers of men, will prove no ſhelter againſt Gods judgements when their cup is full; for, *Nineveh is of old like a pool of water, yet they ſhall flee away.* 2. No encouragements will hearten a people purſued of God, and effeminate with ſecurity and eaſe, when their day of trouble comes; for, to ſuch as had lived in her as in a pond, *Stand, ſtand, ſhall they cry, but none ſhall look back.* 3. The great deſert of ſin may be ſeen in the great changes it brings upon moſt flouriſhing places; for, ſo in *Nineveh of old like a pool of water*, there is not one now to take her part, or abide.

Verſe 9. *Take ye the ſpoil of ſilver, take the ſpoile of gold: for there is no end of the ſtore,* and *glory out of all the pleaſant furniture.*

Another effect of the taking of the City is, the ſpoiling thereof by the ſouldiers, unto which, (as being exceeding great for treaſures and precious furniture, and that which the Ninevites gloried much in) the Lord invites them by his Prophet. *Doct.* 1. Riches, jewels, and pleaſant furniture, are ſo far from delivering in a day of wrath, that they are a bait and invitation to enemies, couragiouſly to ſet upon the enjoyers; for, ſo doth the Lords ſpeech, *Take ye the ſpoile,——for there is no end of the ſtore, &c.* import, that the hope of ſpoil made the enemies bold. 2. God doth juſtly ſuffer ſuch to be ſpoiled of their riches and treaſures, as are endleſſe and immoderate in purchaſing, and place their glory in ſuch things; for, ſo much alſo doth this ſpeech import. 3. However inſtruments may unjuſtly deprive

prive wicked men of their gloried in riches, yet it is done in the Lords righteous judgement, who allowes it to be done, though he approve not the way of mens doing of it, but will in due time take order with them therefore; for, albeit the enemies did for their own ends spoile *Nineveh*, yet the Lords invitation, *Take ye the spoile*, sheweth, that it was righteous with him it should be given up.

Vers. 10. *She is empty, and void, and waste, and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much paine is in all loines, and the faces of them all gather blackneſſe.*

The sad case of this taken City is further held forth, that it should be made empty and desolate, and the inhabitants thereof should be utterly discouraged: the inward, feeble and desperate condition of their mindes, through trouble and feare of death, being expressed by usual signes in their body, such as the trembling of the knees, when the strength and spirits go in to keep the heart, *Dan.* 5. 6. pain in the loines, expressing the sorrow of a woman in travel, *Isa.* 13. 8. *Jer.* 30. 6. and blackneſſe in the face, which is a signe of a deadly condition, reaching to the heart, *Joel* 2. 6. *Whence learn*, 1. The Lord can (and will because of sin) lay most populous and flourishing places utterly desolate; for, *Nineveh* that great City, *is empty, and void, and waste.* 2. Guilt, and the want of reconciliation with God, will make men prove great cowards in a day of trouble, either in bearing what they are under, or in looking to what they may expect; for, all these signes of discouragement do teach how heartleſſe their case was, and how little man is able to bear out, when he hath to do with a God dealing in justice.

Ver. 11. *Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions? where the lion, even the old lion walked, and the lions whelp, and none made them afraid.*

12. *The lion did teare in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lioneſſes, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravine.*

The greatneſſe of this deſolation, as alſo the cauſe procuring it, are inſinuated in the admiration, or inſulting of all, who ſee or hear of it, wondering what was become of *Nineveh*, which had been a ſafe and delicate place of abode for magnanimous oppreſſors, both Princes and people, who, as lions, had oppreſſed all others, that they might enrich themſelves and their families, and had brought their purchaſe thither, but now it was aboliſhed, and no more conſpicuous as formerly. *Doct.* 1. Oppreſſion proves men to be brutiſh, and turneth their Palaces and Cities into lions dens, and makes their wealth abomination, for, here theſe oppreſſors are called *lions* and *young lions*, and their citie or houſes *holes and dens*, and their purchaſe *prey and ravine*, which *they teared and ſtrangled*. 2. The judgement of the Lord will ſo follow oppreſſion, as the place of oppreſſors, whither they bring what they have purchaſed by oppreſſion, ſhall not be found, though otherwiſe it ſeemed never ſo impregnable; for, *where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions? where the lion, even the old lion walked, and the lions whelp, and none made them afraid.* 3. The ruine of great oppreſſors, as it will be matter of admiration to ſuch as looked on their ſecure condition by the eye of carnal reaſon; ſo it will be matter of deriſion to ſuch as have ſuffered by them, or do abhor their way, and glorifie God in his juſtice; for, ſo may this queſtion be expounded of the admiration of ſome, and inſulting of others. See, *Iſa.* 14. 10, 11, 12. and *Pſal.* 52. 6, 7. and 58. 10, 11. 4. A faithleſſe and irreligious care of a family, and of poſterity to have them great, is a great ſnare and inducement to draw men to be oppreſſors, which yet doth not aſſoil them before the Lord, for, *the lion did tear in pieces for his whelps, and ſtrangled for his lioneſſes, &c.* and yet they were deſtroyed.

Verſ. 13, *Behold, I* am *againſt thee, ſaith the* LORD *of hoſtes, and I will burne her chariots in the ſmoke, and the ſword ſhall devoure the young lions, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy meſſengers ſhall no more be heard.*

The Lord here expreſſely ownes the ſtroak, threatening to cut off with fire and ſword their means of defence, and oppreſſing people;

ple; and declareth his quarrel to be their oppreſſion and taking of prey, threatening to take away what they had ſo purchaſed, and to hinder them from oppreſſing any more, and that their Meſſengers or Ambaſſadors, ſent to denounce war againſt Nations, or govern Provinces, and eſpecially their blaſphemous meſſengers, ſuch as *Senacherib* and *Rabſhakeh*, 2 *Kings* 18.19. ſhould be made to ceaſe from their inſolencies, and not to be any more heard tell of. *Doct.* 1. The Lords having a quarrel againſt a people or perſon, will produce remarkable effects: for, *Behold, I am againſt thee, ſaith the Lord.* 2. The Lord hath alſufficiency of power and means to bring down any enemy, and to effect what he will; for, he is the *Lord of hoſtes*, who hath all creatures at his command, who can make invincible armies of weakeſt creatures, and at whoſe command *nothing* will ſend forth *all things*. 3. God can eaſily, and will openly, to the terrour of others, cut off the warlike preparations and confidences of wicked men: for, *I will burn her chariots in the ſmoak*; which may import, that he will overthrow them by as ſmall means, as if a ſmoak before a fire were well kindled, ſhould burn chariots, or that he will openly overthrow them, as in a fire, the ſmoak whereof ſhould be ſeen afar off 4. God will cut off the race of oppreſſors continuing in their ſins by ſome remarkable judgement; for, *the ſword ſhall devour the young lions, and I will cut off thy prey.* 5. It is a mark of wicked men never to give over ſin, till the Lord by his judgements render them unable to commit it; for, when *the ſword ſhall devour*, then only is *their prey cut off from the earth.* 6. Oppreſſion of the Church being joyned with inſolent blaſphemy againſt the Lord is a quarrel which he will never put up till he have deſtroyed all the impenitent authors of it, and rendered them unable to do the like again; for, then ſaith he, *the voice of thy meſſengers ſhall no more be heard*; albeit God did cut off *Senacherib* and his army who were the immediate actors; yet his hand is ſtretched out ſtill, till it reach *Nineveh* alſo, from whence they came for the ſame.

CHAP.

# CHAP. III.

FOr the encouragement of the Church of God *Nahum* in this chapter doth again repeat and further confirm the certain and total ruine of *Nineveh*, that ſo alſo he may remove all doubts out of the mindes of any, who could hardly believe ſo ancient and potent a kingdome could be deſtroyed. And, 1. *Nineveh* becauſe of her cruel oppreſſion, is threatened with the terrible preparations of her enemies coming againſt her, and with great ſlaughter, *v.* 1, 2, 3. And is again threatened for her enſlaving of all Nations, with extreme contempt to be poured upon her, *v.* 4, 5, 6, 7. 1. This ſentence is amplified and confirmed by the example of other places, *v.* 8, 9, 10, 11. and by ſhewing the vanity of all that ſhe confided in for ſafety, as ſtrong holds, citizens, hired ſouldiers, officers and nobles, *v.* 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. All which ſhould not exempt her from irreparable ruine, whereat all Nations oppreſſed by her ſhould rejoyce, *v.* 19.

**Ver. 1.** *WO to the bloody city, it is all full of lies and robbery, the prey departeth not.*

*Nineveh* is here accurſed for cruelty, oppreſſion and deceit, wherein ſhe was inceſſant, and threatened with *Wo*, or all miſeries to come upon her. *Whence learn*, 1. The Lord hath an eſpecial controverſie againſt a people given to cruelty and bloodſhed: *Wo to the bloody city*, that is, the city which raiſed it ſelf by blood, and cruel practices, and which yet continueth in them toward other Nations, and among themſelves, as is uſual for them who are too full, to be very inſolent, 2. Diſſimulation, which floweth from a covetous diſpoſition, and a deſire to oppreſſe, is hateful unto the Lord, as well as open violence; for, he can ſee robbery under falſe dealing; therefore are *lies* and *robberies* yoked together: *it is all full of lies and robbery*, that is, theſe evils have overſpread all. 3. This frequent repetition of the

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oppreſſion, and denouncing of wo againſt it, teacheth, that whatever men, who judge by outward appearances, or the people of God in the hour of temptation may think, yet the Lord exceedingly hates oppreſſion, and oppreſſors, let them thrive as they will, they are in a woful condition: *wo to the city that is full of robbery.* 4. The Lord remarks, and eſpecially hates perſeverance in wicked courſes; for *wo* is denounced alſo, becauſe *the prey departeth not*: that is, after ſo long a tract of time, wherein they have continued in this ſin, and not withſtanding they have abundance, yet they give not over oppreſſion; for, no meaſure of worldly wealth will ſatisfie the appetite of ſuch as do tranſgreſſe the limits preſcribed by God, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8, 9, 10.

Ver. 2. *The noiſe of a whip, and the noiſe of the ratling of the wheels, and of the prancing horſes and of the jumping charets.*

3. *The horſemen lifted up both the bright ſword, and the glittering ſpear, and* there is *a multitude of ſlain, and a great number of carcaſes: and* there is *no end of their corpſes, they ſtumble upon their corpſes.*

The ſentence is enlarged, and the *wo* explained, wherein they are threatened, partly with the terrible preparations of the *Caldeans* coming againſt them, which he ſets out in every circumſtance, as if they were then entering the city, and the whips wherewith they drive their chariots, and the noiſe of their chariot-wheels and horſes feet ſounding in the ears of the *Ninevites*, and the weapons of the horſemen dazling their eyes; and partly they are threatened with execution and ſlaughter by theſe enemies, which ſhould be ſo great, that the dead corpſes lying in the way ſhould hinder men to walk on the ſtreets, or to flee away. *Doct.* 1. To be under a wo from the Lord, ſpeaks moſt bitter judgement; for ſo that *Wo*, *v.* 1. is expounded to portend ſo great and terrible ſlaughter; implying that whoſoever are under the Lords curſe, will meet with the like or worſe judgements, though it may be not ſo viſible to a carnall eye. 2. The judgements of God ſent forth in wrath upon his incorrigible enemies, will be terrible and dreadfull unto them, the very approach whereof will be a kinde of death unto them before they be ſlain; for,

therefore doth he threaten them with the ſounding noiſe, and dazling ſight of enemies, and their preparations and approaches, as that which would prove dreadfull to them. 3 Such as delight in blood and cruelty ſhall be recompenced of the Lord to the full, in their own coin; for, in *Nineveh*, given to blood, *v.* 1. *There is a multitude of ſlain, and a great number of carcaſes, &c.* 4. The judgements to come upon the enemies of the Church are to be look't on by the people of God as if they were already inflicted, that they may be comforted in that the Lord executeth judgement for them, and that they be not tempted with beholding the preſent proſperity of enemies; for, therefore alſo is every circumſtance of this ruine marked, as if it were in acting, and the *Ninevites* repreſented as dead corpſes by the Prophet.

Verſe. 4. *Becauſe of the multitude of the whoredomes of the well-favoured harlot, the miſtreſſe of witchcrafts, that ſelleth nations through her whoredomes, & families through her witchcrafts.*

Another branch of the Lords accuſation and quarrell againſt *Nineveh* is, that by her ſubtile and politick courſes, ( reſembled to witchcrafts ) ſhe enhaunced the wealth of other Nations, and brought them into ſlavery, uſing them for her own advantage, and that as harlots by their beauty and artifices do enſnare their Paramours, and bring them and their wealth in their power, ſo ſhe made uſe of her greatneſſe and power together with her policies, to allure Nations to ſubmit to her, as if it had been for their own good. In this ſenſe *horlotrie* underſtood of *Tyrus* her merchandizing, *Iſa.* 23. 15, 17. However, I would not exclude another interpretation alſo; that as idolatry ( which is frequently called *whoredome* ) and deviliſh arts were frequent amongſt theſe eaſtern people, *Iſay* 2. 6. and. 47. 13. So ſhe made uſe of theſe arts to carry on her deſignes of greatneſſe, and enticed others to embrace her idolatry, that ſo they might be united the more firmly unto her for her own advantage, as we ſee, 2 *Kings.* 16. 10. *Doct.* 1. However men do oftentimes glory much in their wit and skill in increaſing their greatneſſe, and outwitting others, yet before the Lord, ſuch ways are the ground of a controverſie, and nothing elſe but *whoredomes* and *witchcrafts*, as here we are taught. 2. Men are naturally immoderate and exceſſive in their deſire and hunting after greatneſſe; for ſuch are

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compared to *harlots* who commit *multitude of whoredoms*, and are never satisfied in their luſt. 3. Worldly and politick States and people, are ſtill to be looked on in all their dealings with others, as ſeeking themſelves and their own intereſts onely, whatever they pretend to the contrary; for, however *Nineveh* held out her beautifull condition to other Nations (as an harlot to her Paramours) to invite them as it were to their own benefit in being under the protection of ſo mighty a State, yet her real intentions were thereby to diſpoſe of them to her own uſe, as ſlaves which are bought & ſold: *the wel-favoured harlot, the miſtreſs of witchcrafts, ſelleth Nations through her whoredomes, and families through her Witchcrafts.* 4 Wicked men are given to abuſe all favours and good things conferred on them by God, and make them ſubſervient to their luſts and deſignes; for, as harlots proſtitute their beauty to allure men to filthineſſe, that they may reap gain; ſo did *Nineveh* make uſe of her greatneſſe to allure others to joyn with her, to her own advantage, and their prejudice, *the well-favoured harlot ſelleth Nations through her whoredomes.* 5. Men given to their luſts and worldly deſignes, uſe to make no ſcruple of unlawfull means to compaſſe their ends before they be fruſtrated of them; for, *Nineveh* was the *miſtreſſe of witchcrafts*, that is, of wicked policies and deceits, or (according to the other interpretation) of deviliſh arts that ſo ſhe might be great, and *ſell families through her witchcrafts.* 6. Wicked men make no account even of that religion which themſelves profeſſe, but in ſo far as it may be ſubſervient to their worldly ends; for, ſo doth *Nineveh* (according to the other interpretation) *ſell Nations through her whoredomes.* She did preſſe her idolatry on others to ſecure them to her, as conceiving religion to be the ſureſt bond of union, or tie to ſubjection, that ſhe might reap benefit by them.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I* am *againſt thee, ſaith the LORD of hoſtes, and I will diſcover thy ſkirts upon thy face, and I will ſhew the nations thy nakedneſſe, and the kingdomes thy ſhame.*

6. *And I will caſt abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will ſet thee as a gazing-ſtock.*

7 *And it ſhall come to paſſe*, that *all they that look upon thee, ſhall flee from thee, and ſay, Nineveh*

*is*

*is laid waste, who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?*

In opposition to her former beauty, the Lord professing himself her party, threatens her first with ignominy and depriving her of her excellencies and ornaments, that she may be loathsome and contemptible to all, as if an harlot were stript, and her cloaths cast back over her head, that her nakedness may be exposed to mockery in the view of men, and as prophane souldiers use to do with captive women. See, *Isa.* 47. 2, 3. *Jer.* 13. 22. 2. He threatens to put yet more affronts upon her beauty, by granting her enemies victory over her, and power to tread her down; as if women in their pomp were all befouled with dung, and so made loathsome. 3. He threatens, that by this means she should be made a publik spectacle, and the matter of horror and detestation to all beholders, there being none to comfort her. *Doct.* 1. Gods being an adversary to the wicked, is neither soon seen by them, nor suppose it be seene, is the sadness of such a condition easily laid to heart; therefore is it again inculcated, *Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hostes*, though it had been told before, chapter 2. 13. 2 Abuse of mercy will in the end resolve in the abusers misery; for, beautifull *Nineveh* who plaid the harlot with it, *her skirts are discovered*, and *abominable filth* cast upon her, and she with whom the Nations committed fornication, is made the object of peoples detestation. 3. People in their greatest pomp and glory, do but flie with borrowed wings, and are in such a condition as God can easily strip them of what they gloried in, and set them as contemptible objects; for, *Nineveh* hath *shame and nakedness*, which he *will shew to nations and kingdomes*, when he strips her of her borrowed glory. 4. As wicked men cannot enjoy honour and greatness in the world, and not abuse it: so the Lord is provoked thereby to plague the abusers with ignominy; for, *I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile*, saith he to glorious *Nineveh*. 5. The Lord will make such as have publikly sinned without repentance, to become publik spectacles of his justice and severity, to the terror and astonishment of the beholders; for *I will set thee as a gazing-stock, and it shall come to passe that all they that look upon thee, shall flee from thee.* 6. It is righteous with God, not onely so to smite his enemies, as the stroak shall surpasse the cure of any consolations from friends; and

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the terror thereof ſo to overwhelm them, as that they cannot and dare not appear to bemoan and comfort them; but it is righteous alſo, that ſuch as have oppreſſed without pity, ſhould have none to condole with them in their juſtly procured and inflicted corrections; for, all this is imported in this threatening, *all that look upon thee ſhall flee from thee, and ſay, Nineveh is laid waſte, who will bemoan her? whence ſhall I ſeek comforters for thee?* that no ſorrow ſhould expreſſe her ſtroak, nor any conſolations prove ſufficient, that her friends being terrified, ſhould not be able to appear for her, and that ſhe ſhould be abhorred and deteſted of all in her miſeries.

Ver. 8. *Art thou better then populous No, that was ſituate among the rivers,* that had *the waters round about it, whoſe rampart* was *the ſea,* and *her wall was from the ſea?*

9. *Ethiopia and Egypt* were *her ſtrength, and* it was *infinite, Put, and Lubim were thy helpers.*

10. *Yet* was *ſhe carried away, ſhe went into captivity, her young children alſo were daſhed in pieces at the top of all the ſtreets; and they caſt lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*

11. *Thou alſo ſhalt be drunken, thou ſhalt be hid, thou alſo ſhalt ſeek ſtrength becauſe of the enemy.*

To confirm what hath been ſaid, and to cruſh all preſumptuous thoughts in *Nineveh* as if ſhe ſhould be able to ſtand it out; he ſets before her the example of *No*, or *Alexandria*, a great city in *Egypt*, or neer unto it, of which ſee, *Jer.* 46. 25. *Ezech.* 30. 15. And in this example, 1. He rehearſeth the flouriſhing condition of that city, it was populous, or *nouriſhing*, that is, a great market-town, no uriſhing the countrey about it; it was ſtrong be ſituation, being built among the Channels of *Nilus*, and environed with ſtrong ramparts, the ſea alſo encloſing it on divers parts; it was alſo ſtrong by great and many confederates, ſuch as *Ethiopians*, or (*Arabians*, who are frequently named *Cuſh* in Scripture) *Egyptians* and other people of *Africa* wherein the ſpeech is directed to *No*, as inſulting over her vain confidence

confidence in theſe to the terrour of *Nineveh*. 2. He repeats their ſtroak; That that City had been made deſolate, her people being carried captive, her young children daſhed in pieces, her honourable men divided amongſt the ſouldiers as prey, and carried away as ſlaves; as for the time of this deſolation, and the perſons by whom it was acted: it is needleſſe for us further, to enquire, ſeeing the Spirit of God puts it out of controverſie that it was done before the utter ruine of *Nineveh*. 3. This example is applied to *Nineveh*, wherein is ſhewed, that ſince ſhe had no more advantages then the other had, it was but folly to think her ſelf to be invincible; and ſhe is aſſured that how potent ſoever ſhe be, yet ſhe ſhall be drunk with the wine of Gods wrath; and that notwithſtanding her former ſplendour, ſhe ſhould be made to hide her ſelf for ſhame and fear, and become obſcure, as if ſhe had not been; and that ſhe ſhould notwithſtanding her own ſtrength, be forced to ſeek help from abroad, or to ſupplicate her enemies for pity. *Doct.* 1. The Lord hath given abundant proof that there is no power nor probable means of defence able to ſtand out againſt him when he proſecuteth a controverſie; for, ſo doth the bringing in of this inſtance teach. 2. Men are ſtill ready to be preſumptuous and confident of their own ſtanding, whatever they ſee done to others; therefore is this example produced and applied, that her conceit may be thereby cruſhed: *Art thou better then populous No? &c.* 3. Men have nothing to boaſt of as ſufficient to preſerve them from ruine, but others have had the ſame or better, who yet have ſuccumbed; therefore are all the circumſtances of ruined *No*'s ſtrength pointed out, to ſhew that ſhe might well have compared to *Nineveh* in any thing that would have ſeemed to be a defence. 4. The Lords minde concerning ſin and impenitent ſinners, is the ſame in all ages, and he will ſo declare himſelf by his judgements; for as *No* for her ſins *was carried away, &c.* ſo is *Nineveh* threatened becauſe of her provocations: *Thou alſo ſhalt be drunken, &c.* 5. The wicked may not only expect to be deprived of counſel and prudence in ſtraits as drunken men are, but to be totally overwhelmed with the judgements of God in full meaſure; for, they are not to taſte a little of the cup of wrath, but to drink of it till they be drunken; *Thou alſo ſhalt be drunken.* See, *Jer.* 25. 15, 27. 6. The Lord can, and becauſe of ſin will, bury in obſcurity the greateſt of Nations, as if they had never been, and make them who made great ſhew of glory and courage, ſeek holes to hide themſelves in; for, ſaith he, *Thou ſhalt be hid.* 7. Unto ſuch

as

as are pursued by the justice of the Lord, their enemies are made terrible, and all their strength and preparations are not sufficient to secure them from fear, or keep them from being brought into their enemies reverence; for, whatever *Nineveh* had to oppose, yet *thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemie.*

Vers. 12. *All thy strong holds* shall be like *fig-trees with the first ripe figs, if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater.*

For further confirmation of this sentence, the Lord propounds all the vaine confidences of *Nineveh*, and the *Assyrians*, and declareth that they should not be able to deliver them from his hand; Her first vain confidence is her strong holds, which he threatens shall be as easily taken by the enemy, as ripe figs fall from the fig-tree when it is shaken into the shakers mouth, that is to say, they shall be rendered up at the very first assault. *Whence I learn*, 1. Men in a wicked way are ready to delude themselves with many vain thoughts of safety. Therefore is all this pains taken to refute the vain imaginations of *Nineveh*. 2. Strong holds are too weak fortifications to hold out Gods controversie against sin; for, as the sins of the owners ripen them for ruine, and as they are much desired by enemies, so will they be easily taken; so doth this similitude teach us.

Vers. 13. *Behold, thy people in the midst of thee* are *women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies, the fire shall devoure thy bars.*

Her second vain confidence is, her formerly valiant men concerning whom the Lord declares, that though they were enclosed in fortified cities and strong holds, (which may make cowards stout,) and in their own cities and country, which they ought resolutely to defend, yet they should prove timorous and faint-hearted like women, and so should yield up what they ought to defend. See *Jer.* 50. 37. and 51. 30. *Doct.* 1. Men will prove no longer stout then the Lord is with them in mercy, or by them is doing some work in the earth; for, the lion-like *Assyrians*, *chap.* 2. 11, are now to admiration become feeble: *Behold*, saith he, *thy people are women.* 2. No outward encouragement,

or conſideration will put courage into ſuch as God hath made faint; for, *thy people*, even in *the midſt of thee are women*. A third vain confidence, (the vanity whereof dependeth upon the former) is, their frontier garriſons, which they (no doubt obſerving that others had been deſtroyed by themſelves through improvidence that way) had fortified as the gates of their land, and as bars to hinder the enemies progreſſe into the countrey: concerning theſe the Lord threatens, that through the cowardiſe of their ſouldiers they ſhould be ſet open to the enemies, as if fire had burnt them up: It teacheth, that no politick courſes of men, learning, wiſdom from the folly of others, or fortifying themſelves, where others through weakneſſe have been overcome, is ſufficient to ſecure a people from Gods vengeance; *The gates of thy land ſhall be ſet wide open unto thine enemies, the fire ſhall devoure thy bars.*

Verſ. 14 *Draw the waters for the ſiege, fortifie thy ſtrong holds, go into clay, and tread the morter: make ſtrong the brick-kill.*

15. *There ſhall the fire devoure thee: the ſword ſhall cut thee off: it ſhall eat thee up like the canker-worm: make thy ſelf many as the canker-worm: make thy ſelf many as the locuſt.*

16. *Thou haſt multiplied thy merchants above the ſtarres of heaven: the canker-worm ſpoileth and floeth away.*

The vanity of all the former confidences is yet further held forth in an holy mocking of all their preparations, which ſhould not avail; for, albeit they ſhould uſe never ſo much diligence to defend their cities, and for that end ſhould draw water, and diligently repair their ſtrong holds with brick, (under which other things needful for enduring a ſiege are to be comprehended) yet in their greateſt ſtrength the ſword ſhould deſtroy them, and the judgement of God conſume them like fire, and as canker-wormes eat all green fruits; and albeit both the King and the City *Nineveh*, (for the Original ſeemeth to direct the ſpeech to both) ſhould multiplie armies both of their own people, who were moſt part merchants, and of their confederates who traffi.ked with them, and that in as great numbers as if they

were

were swarms of locusts or canker-wormes, or as the starres of heaven, yet thereby should they not be delivered; but as the canker-worm having spoiled all, that there is nothing to eat, doth then flee away; so their souldiers, confederates, and their own merchants should desert them, when there should be no commodity to be had by them, and should waste and take from them, but do them no good. *Doct.* 1. The Lords power is so far above mans, that he will, so to say, defie man to avert his judgments by his endeavours; for, here he bids *Nineveh* do her best, *draw the waters for the siege, &c.* and *make thy self many as the canker-worm, &c.* 2. Presumption may continue with carnal men, even till their ruine; for, *Nineveh* is preparing for the siege, and gathering men when she is to be destroyed; not but that it is lawful to use lawful means to prevent destruction when it is threatened; but her sin was to confide in these means, without looking to God or his controversie. 3. Stroaks from the Lord may readily light on men where they think themselves most secure; for, *there* (that is, in thy strong holds fortified and manned by thee) *shall the fire devoure thee, the sword shall cut thee off.* 4. Wrath from the Lord is a sore party to deal with, as destroying totally without mercy; for the wrath of God against *Assyria* executed by the *Caldeans devoureth as fire, and eats up like the canker-worm.* 5. Multitudes of men will not avail nor help in the day of the Lords vengeance; yea, such helpers may hurt when God is angry; for, however she *make her self many*, and *multiply merchants above the starres of heaven*; yet *the canker-worm spoileth and fleeth away*, and so do they. 6. As men usually respect one another, or publick interests, not sincerely, but for their own ends: so do they desert what they seemed to affect, according as the wheel of prosperity turns about; for, *their merchants as the canker-worm do spoil*, and when there is nothing left to spoile or reap benefit by, then they *flee away*.

Ver. 17. *Thy crowned* are *as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grashoppers, which campe in the hedges in the cold day*, but *when the Sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known where they* are.

18. *Thy shepherds slumber, O King of Assyria; thy Nobles shall dwell* in the dust: *thy people is scattered upon the mountaines, and no man gathereth* them.

A fourth vain confidence is, their great men, their counſellors, and valourous commanders, concerning whom the Lord threatens, that ſome of them being only for eating, and idle effeminate waſters, as locuſts and graſhoppers are, and having made a ſhelter of *Aſſyria* for their own advantage, ſhall whenever a ſtorm appears, not only be eaſily terrified, but ſeeing ſome ſunſhine of a deliverance, and that they may live without *Aſſyria*'s favour, they ſhall quite deſert them and run away. And this ſeems to be ſpoken of their tributary Kings and Princes, or hired officers; he threatens alſo that others of them (which agreeeth moſt properly to their own Counſellors, Princes and Commanders) ſhould become ſtupid, baſe and careleſſe, and deſtitute of counſel, as men in a ſlumber, and that they ſhould not prove active for defence of the countrey and city, but dwell or lie ſtill (as the Original hath it) in their ſtrong holds, as if they were ſick; ſo, *Jer.* 51.30. and that by this means even the King (to whom the ſpeech is directed) ſhould be undone, and the people be expoſed to al hazards, as ſheep ſcattered upon the mountains without a ſhepherd. *Doct.* 1. The greatneſſe of men, (however it be often too much confided in) can contribute nothing for ſtanding out againſt his judgments who is higher then the higheſt; for, this alſo is declared here to be a vain confidence, and therefore ought not to weaken the Churches faith in expecting vengeance on the wicked. 2. Men do debaſe their own greatneſs, when by reaſon therof they take liberty to drown themſelves in ſenſual delights, and to give themſelves to effeminate idleneſſe; for, ſuch were theſe *crowned as the locuſts, and captains as the great graſhoppers.* 3. It is incident even to great men whatever they pretend of generoſity, to make themſelves and their own commodity, the ſcope and drift of all their actions, and ſo to walk as may lead to that end; for, ſaith he, *thy crowned* (as well as merchants, *ver.* 16.) *are as the locuſts, and thy captains as the great graſhoppers which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the Sun ariſeth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are.* 4. It is an iniquity and great baſeneſs, and a plague on rulers to be ſtupid, ſluggiſh, ſelfiſh and careful only of their own defence and ſafety, when publick hazards are imminent or incumbent. Such was their judgment here, *Thy ſhepherds ſlumber, thy Nobles dwell,* or *lie ſtill.* 5. Such as have moſt eminently abuſed days of proſperity, ſhalbe made to feel moſt of adverſity, were they never ſo great; therefore is this threatening directed to the King, as he who ſhould feel it moſt;

*Thy*

*Thy ſhepherds ſlumber, O King of Aſſyria, &c.* 6. Evil rulers are ſent of the Lord, as a plague and preſage of ruine to come upon a ſinful people; for, when *ſhepherds ſlumber*, then *people are ſcattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them.* See, *Iſa.* 3. 4, 5, and 19. 13, 14.

Verſ. 19. *There is no healing of thy bruiſe: thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee, ſhall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedneſſe paſſed continually?*

The judgment is here ſummed up, and declared that it ſhal be an irreparable ſtroak, a wound not to be drawn together, nor wrinkled as wounds do when they begin to heal: and that as it ſhould not be healed, ſo it ſhould be very painful and grievous; and that there ſhould be none to comfort them under all this, but all ready, as they ſhould hear of it, to clap their hands for joy, and inſult over them; and that becauſe of a long time they had been wicked oppreſſors of all round about them. *Doct.* 1. As the Lords chaſtiſements of his people end all in mercy; ſo his laſt and final word to the wicked is wrath; for, this meſſage cloſeth with denouncing of judgment, without hope of recovery, or comfort under it. 2. It is matter of great comfort in trouble, to have hope of a bleſſed iſſue in due time: for, ſo much may be gathered from *Aſſyrias* miſery, that ſtroaks are then only deplorable, when *there is no healing of thy bruiſe.* 3. It is alſo a great mercy in troubles, to get an eaſie way of bearing them, and breathing under them; for, to the wicked it is not ſo, but their wounds are daily ripped up afreſh: *thy wound is grievous*, or *painful.* 4. It may make afflictions the more eaſie, when the afflicted have any ſympathizers to bemoan and condole with them in their troubles; for, it is yet more of *Aſſyria's* miſery, *that all that hear the bruit of thee ſhall clap their hands.* 5. The world ſhall in due time be refreſhed and comforted with ſeeing or hearing of the ruine of oppreſſors; for, they ſhall *clap their hands over thee, upon whom thy wickedneſſe hath paſſed.* 6. Cruelty and oppreſſion ſhall be rewarded in its own coin, by the cutting off of the authors thereof, without piety or commiſeration from any; for, ſo doth that reaſon of the worlds inſulting and joy import; *for upon whom hath not thy wickedneſſe paſſed continually?*

# Habakkuk.

## THE ARGUMENT.

*IT cannot be certainly determined at what time this Prophet lived and exercised his function; whether under* Manasseh, *in whose reign iniquity was come to a great height: or rather, at the same time that* Jeremiah *began to prophesie, yet certain it is, that he lived towards the latter end of Gods patience with the Jews, and before the last destruction by the Caldeans: a part, if not the whole whereof, it seems was to be inflicted in their dayes to whom he preached, as appeareth from* chap. 1. 5. *The prophecie is held forth, partly, by way of doctrinal prediction,* chap. 1. *and* 2. *and partly, by way of meditation or prayer,* chap. 3. *and may be summed up in a Dialogue betwixt the Lord and his servant, wherein the Prophet, complaining of the iniquity of the times, and being forewarned of the destruction and captivity of the Jewes by the Caldeans, doth again plead with God about the prospering of such a wicked people as the Caldeans were,* chap. 1. *and waiting for an answer, he is commanded to stir up the godly to live by faith, and take heed of Apostasie in the time of their captivity, expecting the ruine of the Caldeans their oppressors,* chap. 2. *In which answer the Prophet acquiesceth, submitting unto the Lords will, and praying and believing that God would preserve, and at length deliver his work, his Church and Elect,* chap. 3. *all which exercises the Prophet publisheth and leaveth on record, for terrifying the wicked, and inviting them to repentance, and for the encouragement of the godly under the sad calamities that were approaching.*

CHAP.

# CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter, (after the Inſcription, *ver.* 1.) Firſt, the Prophet complains to God of the iniquity of the times, and that no courſe was taken to correct or ſuppreſs the deſperate wickedneſs of that people, notwithſtanding either his former complaints, *v.* 2. or the vexation of his or the godlies ſoules by it, *v.* 3. or the fearful abuſe of Gods indulgence, *ver.* 4. 2. The Lord in anſwer to this complaint, ſheweth to the Church by the Prophet, the admirable, incredible and ſpeedy judgements that were to come upon them, *ver.* 5. and that by the Caldeans, whoſe diſpoſitions, furniture and actions, together with the ill uſe they ſhould make of their ſucceſſe, is held forth, *ver* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. 3. The Prophet receiving this eſtabliſheth himſelf in the faith of the preſervation of the Church, and the godly in the midſt of this deſtruction, *ver.* 12. and expoſtulates with God concerning his holy Providence, in permitting ſo wicked a people as the Caldeans to prevaile againſt the Church, though ſinful, *v.* 13. conſidering both their unjuſt and violent conqueſt, *v.* 14, 15.—— and their ſinful abuſe of it, *ver.* ——15, 16. which therefore he thinks ſhould not proſper, *ver.* 17.

Verſ. 1. *THe burden which Habakkuk the Prophet did ſee.*

This verſe holdeth forth the ſubject matter of this prophecie, which is chiefly grievous threatenings, firſt againſt the Jews, and then againſt the Caldeans, together with the Penman, and divine authority of this Scripture, that he not only was a Prophet by office, but had this doctrine by viſion and ſpeciall illumination. *Doct.* 1. In our making uſe of any portion of holy Scripture, we ought to begin at the ſtudy of the divine authority thereof, to the end we may labour to come to it with more reve-

rence, confidence, and with more of that spirit which endited it; for, therefore is it prefixed, that the Penman of this Scripture was *a Prophet*, and did *see it* in vision. 2. The studie of the divine authority of Scripture, may hide and take our mindes off, looking to, or stumbling at the weakneſſe or meanneſſe of instruments carrying the ſame; for the Spirit of God thinks it a needleſſe work for thoſe, who take up this doctrine as a divine viſion to enquire much about the Penman, and therefore only expreſſeth his name and office, *Habakkuk the Prophet*. See, 1 *Cor.* 15. 11. 3. The doctrine of divine vengeance againſt ſin and ſinners, being rightly conſidered, will be found ſad and inſupportable; therefore albeit all divine doctrine may be called *A burden* (as it is, *Prov.* 30. 1. in the Original) in regard of the weight it ought to have upon our ſpirits, whether directions, how to get them obeyed, *Rev.* 2. 24, 25. or comforts, how to walk anſwerably under them: yet in the ordinary Scripture-phraſe, and by the Prophet here, the name is applied to threatenings: He calls this doctrine *The burden*, as being ſent from a God, burdened with the wickedneſſe of ſinners, *Iſa.* 1. 4. *Amos* 2. 13. as being a grief and burden to the meſſengers to carry ſuch tydings, as being burdenſome to the ſecure, to hear their ſinful wayes contradicted and reproved, *Jer.* 23. 33. as being ſad to the penitent when they lay it to heart, as portending ſad ruine, however men account them but *winde*, *Jer.* 5. 13. And finally, it ought to be a burden, that God, who delights to ſpeak in other termes to his Church, ſhould be provoked to write only bitter things. 4. Albeit that vengeance on impenitent ſinners, being long forborne, may ſeem incredible, yet it is moſt certain and clear, that it is coming, therefore however that ſecure people bleſſed themſelves; yet the Prophet not only hears, but *ſeeth* their *burden*, as if it were preſent; and albeit the extraordinary gift of propheſying be ceaſed, yet every godly man may be as certain from the Word of judgements on impenitent ſinners, as if they ſaw them with their eyes.

Verſ. 2. *O LORD, how long ſhall I crie, and thou wilt not heare*: even *cry out unto thee* of *violence, and thou wilt not ſave*?

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The Prophet in his own and the godlies name, begins at an expoſtulation with God, that the generality of the Jewes being ſo deſperately wicked, as he inſtanceth in ſeveral iniquities, eſpecially againſt the ſecond Table; yet the Lord in his patience did bear with them, and took no courſe to vindicate his own glory, or abate this deluge of ſin one way or other. This complaint he amplifieth and aggravateth from other conſiderations; whereof the firſt is in this verſe, that he having taken ſo much pains on this people to no purpoſe, but their injuſtice ſwelling up and breaking out in open violence, had been forced of a long time to cry to *God* againſt them: but neither was his prayer regarded, nor the oppreſſed ſaved from violence, which he thinks ſtrange of. We are not to underſtand this ſo as if the Prophet were quarrelling with God, or cruel to this people, toward whom he evidenceth ſo much tenderneſſe afterward, but that having long dealt with that people, and with God by prayer for ſome ſucceſſe to his Miniſtery, and finding iniquity to abound to the diſhonour of God, and oppreſſion of the godly, he (not ſo much out of any hatred againſt them, as out of zeal to Gods honour, out of hatred of ſin, and pity toward the oppreſſed) complains that there was no redreſſe of this, and that neither by amending of them, nor correcting of them, the courſe of ſin was ſtopped. *Doct.* 1. As the duties of the ſecond Table are a touchſtone, whereby to try the ſincerity of thoſe who profeſſe true Religion, and are within the viſible Church: ſo when Profeſſors once declare their unſoundneſſe that way, they may readily come to a very great height in it: for, here they were come to the extremity of violence, and combuſtions among themſelves. 2. The ready way to make mens endeavours in their calling, (eſpecially ſuch as are employed in dealing with ſoules) effectual, is to be much with God in prayer: therefore the Prophet having ſpent much time in vain, is put *to cry* to God about it that he would interpoſe; Cries to God are our beſt weapons againſt ſin. 3. The iniquity of a viſible Church may come to that height, that ſuch as would ſtand in the gap, may be ready, if not to cry againſt them, yet to ſubmit if God ſhould ſend judgements: for the Prophet is ſo put to it, with their ſin diſhonouring God, and oppreſſing the godly, that he *crieth*, that God would one way or other ſtop the courſe of their iniquity. See, *Numb* 16.15. 4. Zeal for God and his honour, and hatred againſt ſin, ought to overſway our reſpects to any creature whatſoever: for, from this principle it is that the Prophet *cries* to God

God againſt this people, otherwiſe dear to him. 5. The truly godly, and eſpecially ſuch as are called to carry the Lords Name unto his people, are to lay their reckoning, not to have a ſmooth and eaſie life, but to wreſtle under much humbling, toile and vexation; for, ſuch was the Prophets lot here, and the godlies, in whoſe name he complains. 6. So unſearchable are the Lords counſels, as he may ſee fit to delay the anſwer of deſires, which are put up from much zeal to his glory, and compaſſion toward the godly oppreſſed, againſt ſinful men and their courſes; for, the Prophet here hath *cried*, and that ſo *long*, as he is like to quarrel and queſtion God about it, and yet the Lord did not *hear* nor *ſave*. 7. The patience of God toward his ſinful Church and People, doth farre ſurpaſſe the patience of the beſt of men; for, when the Prophet is wearie, and like to fall into impatiencie at Gods long-ſuffering; yet the Lord was not wearie to wait upon them.

Verſe 3. *Why doeſt thou ſhew me iniquity, and cauſe me to behold grievance? for ſpoiling and violence* are *before me, and there are* that *raiſe up ſtrife and contention.*

A ſecond amplification of this complaint (which cleareth more the ground of his crying. *verſe* 2. and ſetteth out more of their ſinne) is, that their wickedneſſe in vexing and grieving one another, and the godly amongſt them, and their violent ſpoiling of one another, together with their ſtarting and keeping up law-ſuits and contentions (or, of ſtrife againſt the meſſengers of God, who reproved them, as was uſual, *Jer.* 15. 10. *Hoſ.* 4. 4.) that I ſay, all theſe were not only publick and open in the Prophets and godlies view, whereever they went, but a great grief and vexation unto them; their hearts were over-charged when they ſaw ſuch wickedneſſe, and God taking no order with it. *Doct.* 1. When once men ſhake off the fear of God, it is righteous with him to give them up to break all bonds of love, humanity and civil ſociety amongſt men; for theſe godleſſe men are given up to *iniquitie, grievance, ſpoiling and violence, &c.* Thus the Lord ſheweth, how unfixed they are in all things, who hold not faſt the root of his feare. 2. It may be the lot of the Lords moſt faithful ſervants, to ſee ſad ſights of wickedneſſe among the people

people committed to their charge, instead of comfortable fruits of their Ministery. This Prophet after his pains taken, seeth only *iniquitie and grievance*, and every where *spoiling and violence are before him*, these sinnes being so impudently committed, that the actors cared not who saw them. See, *Isai.* 49. 4. 3. Albeit it be the duty of the Lords people and faithful servants, not to carve out what shall be their own lot and successe in the world, yet they ought not only to keep themselves unspotted, but to be seriously affected and vexed with the iniquities of the times: for saith the Prophet, *Why doest thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance*? Not so much quarrelling with Gods Providence towards him, as testifying his own and the godlies vexation by seeing these things. See, *Ezek.* 9. 4. 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. To be vexed with the evils of the time, is a way to keep our selves from falling into them, and a ground of hope that God will appear, as the Prophets reasoning imports. 4. However the godly may be called to contend and strive both for God and for their owne rights, yet it is a mark of an unsanctified spirit, to delight in the fire of contention, and either to beget or entertain them needlesly or unjustly: This was one of the vexing evils of the time, *There are that raise up strife and contention.*

Vers. 4. *Therefore the law is slacked, and judgement doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compasse about the righteous, therefore wrong judgement proceedeth.*

A third aggravation of his complaint (holding out yet more of the iniquity of the times) is taken from the consequents of Gods indulgence toward that people, that they were emboldened to sinne by it, and grew the worse for that they were spared: for, when the Prophets preached, and men rebelled, and yet God spared them, they did hereby take occasion to contemn the Law and Word of God as a dead thing, having no vigour nor authority, and so ran on all mad courses, insomuch that no justice was to be found; for, if there were any who respected equity or right, they were so overpowered with the multitude of wicked men, that they durst not appear, nor could effect any thing, and so justice could not choose but be wrested. *Doct.* 1. It should be the godlies endeavor to have their zeal against sin cleanly, and arising upon

upon justifiable grounds; for, here the Prophet cleares, that his zeal against the iniquity of the times, flowed not from any prejudice he sustained thereby, but from the over-turning of all Religion and justice that appeared therein. 2. The Lords forbearing and long-suffering oft-times prove a snare to wicked men, hardening them in their evil course; for, because of Gods indulgence, *Therefore the Law is slacked, &c.* 3. It is not the enjoyment of the Word of God or Ordinances, but their having authority and vigour in our hearts and practices, that will prove blessed in enjoying them; for, this people had the Law, but it was the quarrel, that it was slacked or dead in its authority: *The Law is slacked*; the similitude is taken from the faint or lifeless pulse of a dying man. 4. Contempt of the authority of the Word openeth the door to all wickedness, and justice will go to ruine among men, where Religion hath no place; for, these two are conjoyned, *The Law is slacked, and judgement doth never go forth.* 5. It is a great height of a lands guiltiness when Judicatories and Courts of Justice become corrupt; for that is the height of their impiety, and the evidence of a despised Law, that *Judgement doth never go forth, &c.* 6. Times of general defection prove ordinarily times of great trial to the godly and righteous, not only are their souls vexed, and they supplanted in their righteous cause, but they dare hardly appear against the stream of injustice; or, if they do appear, they cannot be able to effect any thing that is right, but all goeth wrong, do what they can; for, *Then the wicked compasseth about the righteous, therefore wrong judgement proceedeth.*

Ver. 5. *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder miraculously: for I will work a work in your dayes,* which *ye will not beleeve, though it be told* you.

Followeth to *verse* 12. the Lords answer to this expostulation, containing a prophecie of the destruction of the Jewes by the Caldeans, which is here described generally from severall properties, 1. That it should be a singular and wonderful destruction, insomuch that if any of the Heathen should consider it, it would breed admiration in them, *Deut.* 28. 37. and 29. 24, 25. 1 *Kings* 9. 8. or if the Jewes should consider any stroak inflicted on the Heathen, they should admire that their owne stroak

was

was ſadder, as, *Dan.* 9. 12. 2. That it ſhould be incredible to themſelves, who dreamed of eaſe, and yet be true. And 3. That it ſhould be ſpeedy, and come to paſſe, even in their time to whom this was preached. *Doct.* 1. When men harden themſelves in their evil wayes, becauſe of Gods forbearance, and the Word hath no authority among them, then the Lord will ſpeak in another language by his rod; for, becauſe of that contempt of the Word, *ver.* 4. the Lord *will work a work*, that is, will ſend judgments which he will owne, and wherein he will be ſeen. 2. The Lords long-ſuffering patience toward impenitent ſinners, will not alwayes laſt, but when their iniquity is come to an height, it will alſo end in ſad judgements; therefore albeit the Lords patience had out-wearied the Prophets patience, yet now *I will work a work in your dayes*, ſaith the Lord. 3. As abuſe of mercie offered to the Church, deſerves ſadder judgements then the ſin of Heathens, who have not ſuch an offer, *Matth.* 11. 22, 24. So it is an addition to the Churches calamity, when the Heathen and enemies, who have been witneſſes to Gods working for her, ſhall become Spectators and Admirers of the hand of God againſt her; both theſe are held forth in that Preface, *Behold ye among the Heathen, and regard and wonder marvellouſly: for I will work a work, &c.* as hath been before explained. 4. It is uſual, that when judgement cometh upon an impenitent people, they attain not to any right uſe of it, but are ſurpriſed with admiration and aſtoniſhment under it: for, ſo is fore-propheſied even of the Jewes, that they ſhall *behold, and regard, and wonder marvellouſly* at their own calamity, and go no further. 5. This ſtupid diſpoſition, as it flowes from former contempt of Gods Word, which hath ſo ſtupified them as judgements cannot pierce; ſo it will prove fruitleſſe, and doth portend the further ruine of ſuch as continue in it; ſo the Apoſtle citing this place, *Acts* 13. 41. makes clear, that they are *deſpiſers* who *wonder*, as is alſo clear from *v.* 4. and that they *wonder and periſh*, or *vaniſh*, that is, as their admiration and aſtoniſhment uſually vaniſheth and cometh to nothing, without any fruit; ſo ſuch a diſpoſition portends ruine, and ſuch a ſtroak will undo a people, they not being able to endure and bear out under both the ſtroak and fearful aſtoniſhment accompanying it. 6. As the Lords judgements upon the Church may be far beyond the expectation of the Heathen and her very enemies, *Lam.* 4. 12. ſo it is juſt with God, that thoſe, who doting on their priviledges, do contemn the Word, ſhould meet with unexpected and incredible

judge-

judgements; for, so saith he to these prophane Jews: *I will work a work which ye will not belive, though it be told you.* 7. Divine indignation against sin is more terrible, and will appear more sad when it is inflicted, then secure sinners do ordinarily imagine: so much also is intimated, in that this work will be above belief; *Ye will not believe, though it be told you.* See, *Psal.* 90. 11. 8. The contempt of the Gospel, and the rejection of Christ, offered unto lost man, is the height of iniquity, and draws on all the judgements, that at any time have been threatened against any sin; therefore the Apostle, *Acts* 13. 41. denounceth the same judgement here threatened for contempt of the law, and sins against the second Table, to come upon the Jews who opposed the Gospel, and rejected the Messiah, as being then fully accomplished when wrath came upon them to the uttermost, for casting off of Christ.

Ver. 6. *For lo, I raise up the Caldeans, that bitter and hasty Nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possesse the dwelling places* that are *not theirs.*

The Prophet subjoynes a particular description of this calamity, in describing the instruments of it, the Caldeans under *Nebuchadnezzar* their King, whose disposition, furniture and proceedings are so exactly set down, as may confirme the truth of the prediction, may set forth the justice of God in repaying the Jewes in their own coine, may be terrible to the stout-hearted among them, and may confirme the godlies hope of a deliverance from the way of the Caldeans their managing that work. This description is contained in several particulars; the first is, that they are a Nation of a bitter, cruel, fierce and active temper; who therefore, to satisfie their ambitious covetousnesse, should speedily and without fear over-spread the land of *Judea*, not only to over-run it, but to make a Conquest thereof for themselves. *Doct.* 1. When God hath a controversie against a people, he will not want instruments by whom he may prosecute it; for, he can fetch *the Caldeans* from afar, who being already satiated with victories and conquests, needed not otherwise much to have minded so remote a corner as *Judah.*

2. Instruments

2. Instruments of vengeance upon the Church, would be looked upon as imployed by God, and therefore the Churches eyes would be more on God then on them; for, *Lo, I raise up the Caldeans*, saith the Lord. 3. It is usual for the Lord to give up troublers and oppressors of the world, to meddle also with his Church, that it may hasten their ruine, however the Church be sinfull, therefore the Church is to be chastised *by the Caldeans*, who were *the hammer of the whole earth*, Jer. 50. 23. that this might hasten the filling of their cup. 4. The Lord can make holy use, even of the sins of creatures, imployed for executing of his judgements; for, *He raiseth up the Caldeans, that bitter and hastie Nation*, and makes use of this their temper, without any imputation to his holinesse. 5. When the Lord armes any instruments with vengeance against a sinfull people, they will not want dispositions and successe for attaining his end: for, if God *raise up the Caldeans* against the Church, then they are not only *bitter* and *fierce*, but a *hastie* or *active Nation*, and will *march through the breadth of the land*, without opposition or fear, and will not only overcome, but so carrie all before them, as they may *possesse the dwellings that are not theirs*, without molestation. 6. The Lord in executing vengeance, doth righteously proportion mens sins and his judgements, and pay home transgressors in thei own coine, therefore the Jews who had been cruel, meet now with bitter adversaries, and they who had used *spoiling and violence* towards others, *v.* 2. are now over-run and cast out of their own possessions. The like also may be read in the following purpose. 7. However men account it purchase good enough, when they are able by power to overturne others, and sit down in their room, yet the Lord doth not so reckon, but will put a difference betwixt mens power or possession and their right; for, albeit the Caldeans conquered *Judah*, yet in the Lords account, *They possesse the dwelling places that are not theirs.*

Verse. 7. *They are terrible and dreadfull, their judgement and dignity shall proceed of themselves.*

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The Caldeans imployed in this work, are yet further described, that being armed with divine vengeance, emboldened with former victories, and exercising the same cruelly, they should fill the land with terrour and dread of them, which they should also tyrannically improve, and be their own carvers in all matters of advantage and honour, standing to no law either of Nature or Nations, in their dealing with a terrified and subdued people, but meerly following their own will armed with power *Doct.* 1. Divine indignation pursuing sinners, will take away their heart and courage in a strait, and make their enemies terrible to them; for, so are the Caldeans to the sinfull Jewes *terrible and dreadfull.* 2. When a people do not stand in awe of God speaking from his Word to them, he doth righteously send judgements upon them, which will cause their hearts to faint; for, the Caldeans are *terrible and dreadfull* to these wicked Jews who sleighted the Law, & God Almighty speaking in it, *v.* 4 3. It is a great height of impiety before the Lord, when besides the unlawfullnesse of a war in general, and many particular acts of injustice in the heat of hostility, a Conquerour even in cold blood hath no respect to right or wrong; whereas the fear of God should be a law to men, had they never so much power. Therefore it is the Caldeans sinne, that *their judgement and dignity shall proceed of themselves.* 4. It is righteous with God to punish corruption in Judicatories, and perverting of justice and wilfull stubbornesse in sin, with unjust oppression from enemies, and to send a Conquerours sword to give laws to such as have perverted justice; for, because *the law is slacked, and judgement doth never go forth, &c. ver.* 4. therefore he sends the Caldeans, whose *judgement and dignity shall proceed of themselves.*

Ver. 8. *Their horses also are swifter then the leopards, and are more fierce then the ravening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from farre, they shall flie as the Eagle* that *hasteth to eate.*

It is thirdly declared in this description, that the Caldeans shall not want meanes, wherewith to prosecute their designes

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and enterprizes, which is inſtanced in their horſes, who are ſwifter then fierce leopards, and more fierce or ſharp to go whither they are employed, and tread down oppoſition, then wolves that are hungry through faſting all the day, and therefore run furiouſly to their prey at night: ſo that their fierce riders may eaſily, and in a ſhort time be in every part of the land, being alſo many of them to over-ſpread the land) and though the Caldeans be farre off, yet their ſwift horſes ſhall ſpeedily bring them to *Judea*, and bring them as ſwiftly upon their deſired prey as an Eagle flieth to the carcaſe. See *Jer.* 4. 13. and 48. 40. *Doct.* 1. The Lords hand would be remarked, in furniſhing the enemies of his ſinful people with all neceſſaries, for carrying on their enterprizes; for, therefore are the number and ſwiftneſſe of the Caldeans horſes, to carry them ſo long a journey, and make ſuch ſpeedy execution, recorded: *Their horſes alſo are ſwifter then the leopards, &c.* 2. The fierceneſſe of divine anger againſt ſinne, may be read in the celerity and activity of inſtruments executing the ſame; therefore are the Caldeans deſcribed as ſpeedily *ſpreading themſelves* in all places, as *coming from far*, and *flying as the Eagle* to get prey; as if divine diſpleaſure furniſhed them with wings, and could forbear no longer. 3. It is in vain for impenitent ſinners to lean upon any apparent ground of ſecurity or confidence, when God ariſeth to plead with them; for, *Their horſemen came from far, they ſpread themſelves, and flie as the Eagle that haſteth to eat*; ſhewing that diſtance of place betwixt the enemie and them, or having of their goods and themſelves out of the way, ſhould not availe them.

Verſ. 9. *They ſhall come all for violence: their faces ſhall ſup up as the Eaſt-winde, and they ſhall gather the captivity as the ſand.*

It is fourthly declared, that the enemie ſhall be ſo confident, that they ſhall not much minde fighting in this expedition, but only to ſpoile and prey on a baſe people, wherein they ſhall not be diſappointed: for their very coming and preſence ſhall overwhelme and blaſt all, like an Eaſt-winde, which was violent in theſe countreys, *Iſai.* 27. 8. *Jon.* 4. 8. and they ſhall not only deſtroy peoples ſubſtance, but ſhall lead innumerable people into

captivity. *Doct.* 1. As it is righteous with God to repay violence with violence; ſo it is a very great ſinne to engage in warr, whereby men and countreys are deſtroyed, without a juſt quarrel, but meerly for the ſatisfaction of mens luſts; therefore do *they come all for violence*, in Gods righteouſneſſe, to puniſh the oppreſſing Jewes, and yet they ſinned in their quarrel and way, as minding only to runne them down, and to ſatiate themſelves. 2. The Lord ſeeth it fit, ſometimes to wink at the ſinnes of evil men, and let them have ſucceſſe in their evil cauſe, when he hath his Church to puniſh by them; therefore albeit the Caldeans be both inſatiable and preſumptuous, in that *they come all for violence*, yet it ſucceeds with them, *their faces*, or preſence, *ſups up as the Eaſt-winde*, raiſing a tempeſt, and carrying all before it; and *they gather captivity as the ſand*. 3. The Lords juſtice is to be ſeen and adored in the ignominious ſtroaks which he inflicts upon his incorrigible people; for, ſo doth this ſtroak by the Caldeans import, that they ſhould come againſt *Judah*, not as a people to be fought with, but preyed upon; and that at their coming or face, they ſhould deſtroy all, and gather captives, poſſibly more then themſelves are; ſo baſe are Gods people when he deſerts them for their ſinne, though invincible while he is with them. 4. It may be the lot of the Lords Church, not only to ſuffer the calamities and deſolation of warre, but to loſe her liberty, which ſhe ſo much abuſed, and to be carried into captivity and bondage; for, the Caldeans *faces ſhall ſup up as the Eaſt-winde, and they ſhall gather captivity as the ſand*. See, *Deut.* 28. 47, 48. 5. The conſideration of the cruelty of men, and of the calamities that attend warre and conqueſts, ought to invite ſinners not to provoke God to give them up thereunto, ought to terrifie ſuch as fear not the threatenings of the Word, and ought to point out unto thoſe who are under ſuch a lot, the bitterneſſe of departing from God; for, for theſe ends are the Caldeans cruel deportments recorded, both for the uſe of the Jewes, while they yet continued in their preſent condition, and with reference to their caſe, when the threatening ſhould be accompliſhed.

**Ver. 10.** *And they ſhall ſcoffe at the Kings and the Princes* ſhall be *a ſcorne unto them: they ſhall deride every ſtrong hold: for they ſhall heap duſt and take it.*

It

It is yet further declared, that no oppoſition ſhall hinder them from effecting what the Lord had threatened ſhould be done by them, they ſhall ſleight and contemne all the power, authority and oppoſition of the Jewiſh King and Princes, or any of their Confederates, and having conquered them; ſhall uſe them ignominiouſly, as was accompliſhed, 2 *Kings* 25. 7, 19, 20, 21. and they ſhall eaſily take in their ſtrong holds, by raiſing up mounts againſt them. In the Original, this is ſpoken in the ſingular number of the Caldeans, pointing at their King, who was chief and head in this enterprize. *Doct.* 1. All oppoſition againſt God purſuing for ſinne, will prove vain; were it *Kings*, *Princes*, or *ſtrong holds*, as here we ſee. 2. It is not an eaſie thing to put men from their carnal confidences, that they may humble themſelves before the Lord; for, all theſe things did the Jewes oppoſe to the threatening, to keep themſelves from being affrighted; and all theſe doth the Lord declare to be empty, that they may ſtoop. 3. It is juſt with God to expoſe the greateſt of men to contempt and ignominious uſage when they provoke him, and do not employ their power and authority for him; for, the Caldeans in executing Gods controverſie, *ſcoffe at the Kings, and the Princes ſhall be a ſcorne to them.* 4. Forts and ſtrong holds, wherein men do oft-times place their confidence, will prove but matter of deriſion to the inſtruments of Gods vengeance; for, *they ſhall deride every ſtrong hold*; and however men boaſt of theſe, yet they are eaſily reached; for, an enemie can *heap up duſt* which lieth under his feet, and by that means *take it*.

Ver. 11. *Then ſhall* his *minde change, and he ſhall paſſe over, and offend*, imputing *this his power unto his God.*

The Lord ſubjoynes to all this, as a ground of encouragement and hope to the godly, that the Caldeans, and eſpecially their King, would make a ſinful uſe of all their victories, and of this among the reſt, that he ſhall be ſo drunk with ſucceſſe, as his ſwelling thoughts of himſelf ſhall increaſe, and in his arrogancie ſhall paſſe all bounds of modeſty and humanity, which formerly he might ſeem to have; and ſhall grievouſly tranſgreſſe, in

aſcribing all his victories, and increaſe of his power to his idols, and take the glory from God who employed him as his ſcourge; all which might aſſure the godly, that ſuch a power ſhould not ſtand long. Some inſtances of this carriage we may read, *Dan.* 4. 30. and 5. 4. *Doct.* 1. Proſperity is no leſſe a trial, to bring out what is in mens hearts, and no leſſe difficult to bear then adverſitie is; for here adverſitie tried the Jewes, and proſperity brought out more of the Caldeans naughtineſſe. Thus alſo was *Hezekiah* tried, 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. 2. Albeit that many be employed in wars and making Conqueſts, yet there are but few who reap any great benefits by all their toile, the moſt part of the Conquerours as well as the conquered being but ſlaves to promote the ambitious deſignes of a few, and furniſh fuell to their luſts; for, notwithſtanding there were great armies of the Caldeans, yet all this ſwelling, which they accounted the fruit of their victories, is enjoyed chiefly by their King: *His minde changeth, he ſhall paſſe over, &c.* 3. It is the plague attending proſperity in an evill courſe, that it is curſed to the enjoyers of it, and wicked men are plagued with pride by reaſon of proſperitie, and are encouraged, not only to over-run men, but to tranſgreſſe all bounds of modeſtie in themſelves, and to be more inſolent and bold upon ſinne; for, when *Nebuchadnezzar* prevaileth againſt the Jewes, *then ſhall his minde change, and he ſhall paſſe over, &c.* 4. As it is a judgement for men, following a falſe Religion, to proſper in their oppoſition to the truth, and it is a further judgement, when men are not led to repentance by Gods liberal dealing toward them, but are given up to advance a falſe religion, the more they proſper; for, this was a plague on the Caldeans, that being idolaters, and yet proſpering againſt the people of the true God, they go on, and he *offends, imputing this his power unto his god.* 5. It is one of the difficult ſteps of mans life, and which will never be cleared without the ſure Word, to read the language of divine providence without miſtaking, and ſo father favourable diſpenſations rightly, to ſee aright who beſtows them, and upon what ground; to ſee what good things in men providence doth encourage, what evil it doth reprove; to obſerve whether the good ſucceſſe men have be becauſe of any good in their way, or for any evil that is in their oppoſites: Herein the Caldeans fail, for whereas the Lord imployed them, and puniſhed *Judah* by them, not becauſe they were right, but becauſe of *Judahs* ſin, yet they applaud themſelves as if they had proſpered becauſe of their idolatry, and do impute

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all this power to their idols. 6. Albeit it be not the duty nor disposition of the truly godly to take pleasure in the sinne of any; yet it furnisheth ground of confidence to them, that God will own their quarrell in due time, when they see their enemies abusing their prosperity, they will gather that insolencie, and arrogancie shall not escape unpunished, that it shall not be a stable conqueſt, which is either holden of, or consecrated to idols, and a false religion to the dishonour of the true God; for to this end, and to clear this truth, doth the Lord subjoyn their sinful carriage here to their great successe in the former verses.

Verse 12. Art *thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine holy one? We shall not die; O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgement; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.*

Followeth to the end of the Chapter the Prophets exercise about this answer, and his reply unto it. In this *verse* in a speech directed to God, he confirmes his own and the godlies faith in their being preserved from destruction in this calamity, which is not to be understood only of the preservation of the godly from eternall destruction, what ever become of them outwardly, nor yet of the particular preservation of any particular person, wicked or godly, further then they may have a particular promise for it, as *Baruch* and *Ebedmelech* had: nor is it strictly to be applied by every particular visible Church, as if it might not be destroyed by judgements; for (however the Lord may bring many judgements on a Church before he give her a bill of divorce, and cause her to cease to be a Church, yet) the sad experience of the Churches in *Asia*, and many other do refute that: but the meaning is, that the Lord having resolved to keep a Church continually in the world, and there being a particular promise of the Church of the Jewes their enjoying that priviledge to be the only people of God till the Messiah should come of them, the Prophet upon that generall ground and particular promise, gathers that the Church of the Jewes should not be totally extinguished, or cut off by her captivity in *Babylon*: and yet further confirmes this his confidence from Gods Covenant with them, from his eter-

nall immutability (who had also from of old been in Covenant with them, as the words will also bear) and his holinesse, and from his purpose, power and providence in appointing the Caldeans to punish and correct, but not to destroy the Church. *Doct.* 1. Judgements threatened or inflicted may speak sadder things to the apprehension of the godly, then God really intends by them; for so is insinuated, that to *die*, or irreparable desolation was presented to their minde in this stroak. 2. As the Lord was pleased to continue a Church of the Jewes under the Law in the midst of all their calamities; so he will never want a Church and people in the world, however he may correct; and he may inflict many judgements on a visible Church, and yet not cast her off: and he will be good everlastingly to the souls of his people, albeit he tosse their bodies and their minds both in the world: all which should be accounted of as great mercy in a time of captivity and sad dispensations, for al this is held forth by way of gloriation in the Prophets speech, *we shall not die*. 3. Believers having Gods promise, may humbly carve their own answer according to it, and when they come to God in Prayer may by faith tell him what they look for, and will get; therefore the Prophet saith to God, *O Lord, we shall not die*. 4. It is a character of the truly godly man, that in times of common calamity, he is publick-minded, and his care, Prayer and confidence taken up about the Church and the godly, and not his own case only; therefore saith the Prophet, *We shall not die*, that is, the Church and a seed of God in it shall not perish. 5. Interest in God by vertue of the Covenant made in a Redeemer, speaks comfortable things in saddest times; for, the Propher gathers his confidence from this, *O Lord my God*. 6. Such as are in Covenant with God, and have promises made unto them, will be notably confirmed in the faith of them by taking up the nature, properties, and way of God, the covenanting party, and promise-maker; for, thus doth the Prophet confirme his faith, that his God is *Jehovah*, able to give a being to things promised, that he is *from everlasting*, and eternall, and so is immutable in his purposes, and will eternally have a people to be his Spouse and Subjects, as is gathered from the same attribute, *Psal.* 102. 27, 28. that he is (as the words will also read) *from of old the Lord my God*, or the Churches God, by a Covenant of Grace, even before the Law, *Gal.* 3. 17. and had proved so to that day, and therefore the Law would not disannul that Covenant to such as renouncing their own righteousnesse, flee to God through Christ in that Covenant;

Covenant; and the Lord in his future diſpenſations would prove himſelf to be like himſelf of old; and laſtly, he confirmes his faith from Gods holineſſe, that he is *mine holy One*, without all ſpot of impurity; and therefore as he diſapproveth ſin, and puniſheth it in his people: ſo he will not ſpare it in enemies; far leſſe will he rub any imputation on his holineſſe, by falſifying his Covenant and promiſe made to the Church and elect in it, as is imported, *Pſal.* 60. 6. and 85. 35. In ſumme, *they that know his Name, will truſt in him, Pſal.* 9. 10. 7. As faith muſt not expect to go on without much oppoſition from within; ſo it is the duty of a Believer not to ſuccumbe or give it over at every apprehenſion or tentation, but to ſet himſelf againſt it, and ſhame himſelf from it by venting it to God: This is imported in the way of the Prophets expreſſing his confidence, *Art thou not from everlaſting?* not importing his totall heſitation or queſtioning of this: but rather that as Gods diſpenſations miniſtred occaſion to his weaknes to apprehend death, ſo alſo when he would faſten faith on God, ſenſe did queſtion his attributes, which his heart riſing againſt, he ſhames his own unbelief by venting this queſtion to God; wherein he holds forth the abſurdity of ſenſes apprehenſions, that as it would take away the believers comfort in queſtioning promiſes: ſo alſo it would turn atheiſt, & deny unto God the glory of his attributes; & withal ſhews that the way of curing ſuch diſtempers, is to lay them out to God, although faith could do no more but queſtion the truth of what ſenſe ſaith. 8. God is ſovereign Lord in all calamities, and doth ſet bounds and limits to them, which (whatever either the power of enemies or greatneſſe of trouble inflicted by them ſeem to threaten) ſhall not be tranſgreſſed; therefore doth the Prophet reckon that the Caldeans being ſent out *for judgment*, to puniſh the Church, yet ſuch as might keep within bounds of fatherly *correction* and reproof or to plague and puniſh the rebellious, and correct, and not deſtroy the godly and Church; and that being *ordained or eſtabliſhed*, or ſolidly founded and ſupported for that work only, and that by *the Lord*, who is *mighty* in power, or *a rock* (as the word is) unalterable in his purpoſes, therefore they ſhould not be permitted to go beyond his commiſſion and purpoſe, but they ſhould do his work and pleaſure, not their own; *we ſhall not die, O Lord, thou haſt ordained them for judgement, and, O mighty God, thou haſt eſtabliſhed them or ſcorrection.*

Verſ 13. Thou art *of purer eyes then to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity: wherefore lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly*, and *holdeſt thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous then he?*

The Prophet having confirmed his faith of the preſervation of the Church, ſubjoynes an expoſtulation, that the Lord being ſo pure and holy, as that he cannot ſo much as look upon any ſin wherein men approve themſelves, and for pardon and purging whereof a Mediatour is not ſought unto, far leſſe on groſſe iniquity and unjuſt grievance of others without indignation and anger; yet he ſhould ſeem to take no notice, but did tolerate the *Caldeans* in their treachery and violence againſt the Church, who, though ſinful, were more righteous then their perſecutors; and that he ſhould rather puniſh the Church then them. In which complaint there is not only an expreſſion of the godlies weakneſſe and wraſtlings under ſuch diſpenſations; but their faith alſo is inſinuated, that as God in his holy indignation at ſin, had not ſpared the Church; ſo he would not long wink at the *Caldeans* iniquities, but puniſh them in due time, and deliver his Church. This way of the *Caldeans* upon which he grounds the expoſtulation, is gathered from the former prediction *v.6, 7 &c. Doct.* 1. Such is the weakneſs and inſtability of the ſpirits of the Lords people, and ſo various the occaſions of exerciſing their graces, that they meet with few diſpenſations within time, wherat their hearts are not ready to quarrel; for the Prophet formerly complaining out of zeal, that God took no courſe with the ſins of his people and yet getting an anſwer he is not ſatisfied, but his compaſſion findes new matter of exerciſe and complaint. 2. The cleareſt ſighted Saints may be ſo bemiſted, as not to be able to reconcile Gods diſpenſations, with his nature and attributes, but be ready to apprehend a repugnancy betwix them; for here the Prophet cannot wel reconcile Godsholineſſe with his tolerating of the *Caldean*. 3. We are ſo weak and ſelfiſh, that when providence works not according to our minde and apprehenſions, we are ready to ſuccumb under temptations of Atheiſm,

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and to question Providence; for the Prophet looks on God, as *looking on*, and *holding his tongue*, as a Spectator onely, when he tolerated the *Caldeans*. 4. It is the duty, and will be the care of all the godly to justifie God, and clear him from any imputation, however their weakness cannot see through all the deep mysteries of his Providence about his Church and her enemies; and for that end they should prevent misbelife and temptations language with somewhat of faith. therefore the Prophet in the midst of his dark mists, begins with this as an unalterable ground, (what ever his heart say) that God *is of purer eyes then to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity*. See, *Jer.* 12. 1. 5. The onely best way to refute temptations and dispell mists is, not to debate dark cases with our own hearts overcharged with weakness and fears, but to vent the matter and our case to God, and seek his resolution upon it; for, so doth the Prophet, lying under this temptation, *Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously? &c.* 6 However the Lord have just indignation against, and will in due time punish the grosse iniquities of men without the Church, yet considering the many aggravations of lesse sinnes within the Church, and Gods jealousie over his people, and care to have them reclaimed from every evil course, it is no wonder to see the Churches sins (though lesse in their own nature) punished, when more grosse sins without the Church escape for a time unpunished; for, the Prophets complaint, that God *holds his tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous then he*, imports that God doth so, and Gods doing of it proves it to be a righteous act, however we may quarrell. 7. The Lord makes use of wicked instruments to punish his people, that in the foulnesse of the rod he may discover the vilenesse of their sin: for this end are the *Jewes devoured by the wicked*, and by men viler then themselves. See, *Ezek.* 7. 24. 8. Treachery is a great aggravation of, and addition to oppression when the oppressor by his practices belies his great profession, or particular pretences in a quarrell, or doth otherwise then in reason might be expected, considering either his obligations, or any provocations given, or injuries done to him. Therefore it is the Prophets complaint, that they *deal treacherously, and devour*. Though the Scripture doth not speak particularly of the *Caldeans* treachery, yet it is here asserted they had been such, and therefore the Prophet lamenrs that they should be permitted to prosper. 9 Albeit God be righteous in punishing his Church by wicked instruments, yet the holinesse of God compared with

their

their wickednesse, gives ground of hope that he will at last reckon with them: for, this expostulation of the Prophets imports this truth, that the holinesse of God would not alwayes sit with this, but in the end would right it, *Psal.* 50. 21.

Vers. 14. *And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that* have *no ruler over them.*

15. *They take up all of them with the angle: they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragge, therefore they rejoyce and are glad.*

16. *Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their dragge: because by them their portion* is *fat, and their meat plenteous.*

The Prophet seconds and cleares his expostulation concerning the enemies wickednes from two grounds, whereof the first is taken from their unjust and violent conquest and oppression; for by their oppression men were no otherwise dealt with then irrational creatures, such as fishes, where the greater devoure the lesser, or creeping things wanting rulers, who run over other, and are trodden down by every foot; or yet further, that men should be like fishes, not only devouring one another, but exposed as a prey to every one who can first catch them; that as fishes are easily taken, and (when nets and draggs are made use of) in great numbers: so men and multitudes of people and Nations should without difficulty be preyed upon by oppressors and that as nets and drags do promiscuously draw all to land: so oppressors should get liberty promiscuously to over-run Nations good and bad, the Church as well as others, those who never wronged the oppressors as well as they who injured them most, &c. All this the Prophet cannot see how it should consist with the holy Providence of God, and therefore layeth it before him to clear and consider. *Doct.* 1. Temptations are very ready to grow upon our hand; and the more we think on them, we may seeme to have the more ground to subscribe to them; and therefore as fast as they are suggested to us, we should tell them to God, as the Prophet doth here with his

fertil

fertil invention in expoſtulating and complaining. 2. Men are ſo naughty by nature, as if the Lord would let looſe the reines of a reſtraining Providence, and give them up to themſelves, the world would become monſtrous; for, ſo doth the Prophet teach; *men would be as the fiſhes of the ſea, as the creeping things which have no ruler over them.* 3. It is an evidence of monſtrous and brutiſh wickedneſſe, when men acknowledge no rule of right and wrong, but power, and imploy all the power they have for uſurpation upon others; for, then indeed men *are as the fiſhes the of ſea, and they take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag.* 4. Man being exalted of God above the creatures, it is a great abuſe when their way and lot from others debaſeth them from that dignity, that the oppreſſing *Caldeans* ſhould live in the world like monſtrous beaſts and *fiſhes*, depraving the image of God after which they are made, and obſerving no ſhadow of equity, and that the oppreſſed ſhould not be uſed as rational creatures made after the ſame image, but as *fiſhes taken up with the angle, &c.* 5. However we be unſatiſfied with diſpenſations, yet it is our ſafeſt way, and a ſtep to our iſſue, to keep Gods providence about them ſtill in our eye; for, thus doth the Prophet better his former thoughts of God *looking on, and holding his tongue*, by ſaying, *Thou makeſt* (for the ſpeech is ſtill directed to God) *men as the fiſhes of the ſea, &c.* 6 It beſeemeth the Lords providence well to reſtrain brutiſh violence, to ſee to right and wrong in the world, and to protect the weak and poor from the ſtrong and mighty, or give a redreſſe when they are injured by them; for, the Prophets reaſoning imports, that it would beſeem God not to *make men as fiſhes of the ſea, &c.* and ſo he proved in due time.

The ſecond ground of the Prophets expoſtulation (clearing yet further the *Caldeans* wickedneſſe) is taken from their abuſing of their ſucceſſe, and that the Lord ſhould permit them not onely to do wickedly in their purchaſing, but yet more wickedly in their boaſting and inſulting becauſe of their victories, and in their glorying in their own wiſdome and ſtrength, as if by them they had conquered the world, and made themſelves feaſts and a good life. *Doct.* 1. Evil purchaſe is not ordinarily well uſed, but the purchaſers are given up to inſolency, conceit of themſelves, and luxury which are the uſual plague and ſnare of proſperity; for, *therefore* (that is, ſeeing they

they speed in oppression) *they rejoyce and are glad, therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, &c.* 2. Dispensations are then saddest to the godly, when they seem to minister occasion to men to deprive God of his honour, and to exalt any other thing or way beside him, as the Authour of their felicity; for, this affects the Propher, that *they sacrificed to their net and drag; because by them* (as they judge) *their portion is fat.* 3. When men have troubled themselves and the world also to make themselves great, the result of all will be but a poor addition to their felicity, and that which may be as well wanted as enjoyed; for, all that the *Caldeans* reap, is, that *they rejoyce and are glad, that their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous*; that is, they have good chear and a merry life, and yet they who want such abundance live as well they, and they who are mean may have as much joy and contentment. 4. God will not tolerate, but in due time punish mens insolency and gloriation in their unlawfully purchased pleasures; for, the Prophets expostulation on this ground which at last gets a satisfactory answer, teacheth so much.

## Ver. 17. *Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?*

Upon all these grounds the Prophet concludeth and inferreth that however the *Caldeans* had gone long and far on, yet the Lord would bring their violent courses to some end, and would not suffer them to empty their net, that they might spread it for new purchase; nor so much as permit them to enjoy their desired end in their oppressions, (as if a fisher should not empty his net when he had taken his fish) and that because of their bloody cruelty toward all the Nations under their power, in prosecuting their ends. This he propounds by way of question, to testifie his indignation and zeal against its being over-wise. *Doct.* 1. Gods people may meet with & apprehend many things in his dispensations, which will be matter of much vexation and provoke much indignation in them; so much do these questions teach. 2. Oppression and bloody cruelty joyned with insolency, shall not onely come to an end in due time, but oppressors shall never reach their utmost end and designe, but be miserably disappointed, when their hopes are most bended; for this question includeth a denial, and imports that because of what he hath charged against them

them in the former expoſtulation; *therefore they ſhall not empty their net*, and ſhall not be ſuffered *cantinually to ſlay the Nations.*

## CHAP. II.

IN this Chapter we have the Lords Anſwer to the Prophets expoſtulation, ſhewing that after he hath exerciſed the godlies faith and patience in adhering to the Word, and tried and diſcovered hypocrites and hypocriſie, he would ſeverely puniſh the *Caldeans* for their manifold ſins. And ſo in the Chapter the Prophet waiting for an anſwer to his expoſtulation, *v.*1. is premoniſhed to publiſh the viſion, which he was to receive, conſpicuouſly and clearly, *v.*2. and that becauſe it was not ſpeedily to be accompliſhed, but in the end ſhould not diſappoint them; *v.*3. by which delay the Lord would try the faith or unſoundneſſe of that people, or any of them, *v.*4. In obedience to which command, the Prophet publiſheth the ſore judgements that were to come on the Caldeans for their luxury and ambition, making them inſatiable, *v.* 5, 6, 7, 8. for their covetouſneſſe and aime to be perpetually great, *v*, 9. 10, 11. for their cruell and bloody purpoſe, *v.* 12, 13, 14. for their luxury to which they conſecrated their ſucceſſe, or their carnall policy whereby they carried on their enterpriſes, *v* 15, 16, 17. and for their idolatry wherein they hardened themſelves becauſe of their ſucceſſe, and unto which alſo they conſecrated their unjuſt conqueſts, *v.*18, 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *I will ſtand upon my watch, and ſet me upon the tower, and will watch to ſee what he will ſay unto me, and what I ſhall anſwer when I am reproved.*

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The Prophet having vented his grief, and plunged himſelf in temptations and confuſions, begins now to recollect himſelf; and as a watch-man attends eagerly on his watch-tower, to get intellgence of any danger for the good of the whole City: ſo he being a watch-man to the Church by office, reſolveth by meditation and prayer to wait for a viſion in anſwer to his expoſtulation, wherein he had argued with God; whereby alſo he might be able to quit his own reaſonings, and to ſatisfie the people who were ready to quarrel at thoſe hard tidings concerning their ruine, and did utter to him againſt Gods dealing that which he had expreſſed in his expoſtulation. By all which he cleareth that he took not up the enſuing Meſſage at his own hand, but that he had it from God. *Doct.* 1. It's our ſafeſt way in times of temptation and perplexity, not to lie down under diſcouragment, but to recollect our ſelves, and fix our eyes on God, who onely can clear our minds and quiet our ſpirits; therefore the Prophet after his deep plunge in temptation, *ſets himſelf* to look to God, and get ſomewhat to *anſwer upon his arguing* or *reproof* and *expoſtulation*, (as the Originall will bear) that ſo his minde may be ſettled. 2. It is by the Word that the Lord cleareth dark caſes, and would have his people anſwer their temptations, and ſilence their reaſonings; and a temptation ariſing upon the proſperity of wicked men is a knot that can onely be looſed by God ſpeaking in his Word; for, the Prophet *watcheth to ſee what he will ſay to him*, or *in him*, by way of viſion, and every believer ſhould ſeek to the Law and Teſtimony for this end. See, *Pſal.* 73, 16, 17. 3. Meditation, earneſt Prayer, withdrawing of our mindes off from things viſible, and elevating them to wards God, are the means in the uſe whereof God reveal eth himſelf and his minde from his Word to his people in dark times. This was the *watch* and *tower* whereon the Prophet expected his viſion, and whereon Saints may expect Gods ſecrets revealed from his Scriptures. This doth lift us up above the miſts wherein things below are oft-times covered to our ſenſe and will help to lead us ſafe thorough amidſt the deluſions which are frequent at ſuch times. 4. Faithfull Miniſters ought to acquit themſelves like watchmen in a city or army, to be awake when others ſleep, to be watching with God, and over the people, ſeeking after faithfull inſtructions which they may communicate, ſeeking to be filled from heaven with light and life, that they may pour it out upon his people, and all this eſpecially in hard times; for, this doth the Prophet profeſſe

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to be his practice. *I will ſtand upon my watch, and ſet me upon the tower, and will watch to ſee what he will ſay, and what I ſhall anſwer.* 5. As the Word of the Lord, for moſt part, gets but evil entertainment in hard times, and ſharp Meſſages meet with hot diſputers againſt the equity thereof; ſo peoples diſpoſitions at ſuch a time will give faithfull meſſengers much to do, and many errands to God, for the Prophet (beſide his own arguings within himſelf) was beſet with *reprovers*, *arguers* or quarrellers at theſe meſſages, which puts him the more earneſtly to *ſtand and watch to ſee*, ſaith he, *what I ſhall anſwer when I am reproved*. 6. Albeit the Lords people may have their own debates and ſtraitnings betwixt God and them, yet it is their part to ſmother theſe as much as they can, and to bring up a good report of God and his way to others: for, however the Prophet afterward records that expoſtulation which he had with God, Chap. 1. yet it appeareth, that in the time he had ſo carried himſelf before that murmuring people on Gods behalf, as they were arguing and contending with him, and he *reproved* by them.

Ver. 2. *And the* LORD *anſwered me, and ſaid, Write the viſion, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.*

The Lord anſwers his ſervant attending on him, by giving him a viſion, which is afterward recorded, *v.* 5. &c. and this viſion he is commanded to publiſh clearly, and make it plain to every ones capacity, and to affix copies thereof on the gates of the Temple, or other publike places, (as is reported to have been their cuſtome) and that in ſo legible characters and plain termes, as every on might without difficulty read and underſtand it. *Doct.* 1. However it may ſeem to be in vain for ſouls plunged in perplexities to pluck up their loines, and eye and wait on God, yet the experience of the Saints proves it to be an enriching trade; for, *the Lord anſwered me*, ſaith the Prophet, who had waited for an anſwer from him in his perplexity. 2. It is the will of God that what light or ground of encouragement is given to any in a ſad time, be made forth-coming for the good of others; for, the Prophet is commanded to *write the viſion* for the uſe of the Church, which though it was his duty by vertue

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of his peculiar office, yet it may be a pattern for every one so to act within their station. 2. It is the Churches great advantage, that in her hard lots she hath the minde of God in his Word; whereby she may expound his dealing with her, her durie in every case, and what she may expect concerning her self, her troubles and troublers; for, there is a *vision* here, which the Prophet is to *write* for her use. 4. The Lord hath seen it fit in his deep wisdome, and rich love, and for preventing all occasion of delusion, forgerie or misrepresentation, and for helping of our forgetfulnesse, and perpetuating his truth in the world, not only to deliver his minde to his Church by word of mouth, by himself or by his Prophets, but to leave it on record in writing with her; on which she may build her faith as certainly, as if God were immediately, or by his Prophets speaking to her by Word, from day to day; therefore is the Prophet commanded *to write the vision*, on which the godly were to rest their faith in an hard time. 5. The approved way of publishing Gods Word is not when it is adorned with wisdome or excellency of words, but when it is delivered in simplicity and plainnesse, condescending to the capacity of the meanest: for, saith the Lord, *Make it plain upon Tables, that he may run that readeth it.* 6. The Word of God is deposited with the Church, not to be read and made use of by some sort of persons only, but indifferently by all the members of the Church, and accordingly is fitted to the capacity of all; for, this written vision is not to be hid up in a strange language, and dark expressions, but to be made *plain upon Tables, that he that runs may read it.*

Verse. 3. *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

The Lord subjoyns a reason to this command, (which is also a premonition to the godly, concerning the subsequent message) to wit, that the performance of his decreed vengeance, revealed in this vision, had its prefixed period, before which it could not be accomplished, and at which it should certainly come to passe; and therefore the godly were to look much to the clear-

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ly revealed vision, and laying aside all fervour and haste, patiently to wait for the accomplishment, which should be seasonable and timely, however their sense might judge the contrary. *Doct.* 1. As the mercies promised to the Church, so also the timing of them is in Gods hand, so that we are not to expect that the performance of comfotable promises, or of threatened vengeance against enemies, will be always ready at our call, but must wait the Lords time, who hath his own seasons for afflicting, trying, and delivering; for, *The vision is yet for an appointed time*, saith the Lord. 2. The Lords delaying to appear, diminisheth nothing of the certainty of performance of what he hath promised to the Church, or threatned against her enemies: for, *The vision hath an appointed time*, and an end prefixed, so that the exercise will not be perpetual; and at this time *it shall speak*, to wit, by performance; though we undervalue other expressions of it, yet then it shall speak to our satisfaction, *and not lye*, nor disappoint us, whatever feares we have to the contrary. 3. Such is our weakness, haste and distrust, that when the Lord delayes to perform promises, or what he hath foretold in his word, we are ready to think that he denies to do it at all, which is to contradict the Scriptures verdict here published, to remove such apprehensions; *Though it tarry, it will surely come.* 4. When we do not simply doubt of the certain performance of Gods Word, yet we must not expect to have sense subscribing to all which faith apprehends concerning Gods method in performing; but faith wil oft-times see cause to speak in contradictory terms to senses verdict; for, *Though it tarry, it will not tarry*, saith he; sense will soon weary, and say the performance *tarrieth*, when the Lord satisfieth not its hasty desires, but out-wearieth all carnal confidence and strength; But faith will say, that considering Gods love and wisdome, his holy purposes in filling the cup of the enemies, & bringing good to his people out of every delay, considering our duty, and the exercise of graces we are called to when he delays, considering that his performances come never out of date, and when matters were past all recovery, but that still when he comes he makes up all, as if he had come the first hour; & considering that there is strength enough in God to carry through till deliverance come, *Isa.* 40. 29, 30, 31. Faith, I say, considering all these, will say, *it will not tarry*, but comes in a seasonable and the best time, and before we be fit for it, by performance of these duties required in a time of such exercise by delays. 5. The faith of

Gods certain and ſeaſonable coming to help his people, will enable them patiently to wait for him, without limiting of him, and without taking a wrong way, his iſſue being worth the waiting for in his own way; for, ſaith the Lord, *Though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.* 6. In a time when the Lord ſuſpends the performance of his Word, as Miniſters are ſo much the more to inculcate and cry up the ſure Word, neither eating it becauſe of delayes, nor ſpeaking according to probabilities; ſo it is the duty of the godly in ſuch a time, to be much in ſtudying the Scriptures, to fraught their hearts full with promiſes, that they may commend them, and be ſupported by them: for, *The viſions being for an appointed time,* is a reaſon why the Prophet is commanded, *ver. 2. to write the viſion, and make it plain, &c.* 7. It is a ſweet help to make us lean to the Word, when we ſtudy to ſee Chriſt in it, ſomewhat of him held forth and promiſed in it, and he in whom the promiſes are *Yea* and *Amen*, engaged for the performance of it: therefore the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 10. 37. in ſtead of *the viſion*, holds forth Chriſt as the ſubſtance of the thing promiſed, and the party engaged for the performance, *He that ſhall come, will come, &c.* and this maketh this particular promiſe concerning the *Chaldeans* applicable to all the difficulties of the Church, becauſe Chriſt is alſufficient for every need.

Verſ. 4. *Behold his ſoul* which *is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the juſt ſhall live by his faith.*

The Lord cleareth his purpoſe and end in delaying to perform and fulfil the viſion, which is to try and diſcover who are the lofty and unſound, and who the truly righteous, and ſo premoniſheth all of their hazzard in that time of exerciſe, and informs the truly godly how they may ſubſiſt and hold out. *Doct.* 1. Times of Gods exerciſing his Church, by not appearing viſibly for her, are times of narrow trial, and diſcovery of ſoundnes or Hypocriſie; for, ſo doth the Lord teach us, that *the lifted up ſoul and the juſt* ſhall both appear in their own colours, when *the viſion is yet for an appointed time.* 2. The manner of mens behaviour in a time of trial and tentation, is of great importance, and much notice is taken of it by God, as tending much, either to his honor or diſhonor, and to the promoting of our own peace or diſquiet; therefore a *Behold* is prefixed to this doctrin. 3. How-

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ever affliction and trial ought to be an humbling exercise, yet without Gods blessing, and meeting with corruption, it wil discover and bring forth much pride, and high towers of imaginations swelling against Gods soveraignty, that he should have the disposing of us at his pleasure, censuring his way of proceeding with us, conceiting of wisdom and power to secure our selves, better then by waiting on God, &c. for, then there will be some *whose soul is lifted up.* 4. As a proud, murmuring and conceited disposition under trouble, discovers mens unsoundness, so it will not long wait on God, but make apostasie, either from a general profession of being his followers, or from keeping his way to the use of sinful means, because of which the Lord doth and will testifie that he doth abhor such decliners; for, *His soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him*; and the Apostle in citing this Text, *Heb.* 10. 38. clears, that the proud soul will *draw back*, and that Gods *soul will have no pleasure in him.* 5 Albeit that trial will sift narrowly, and discover the naughtiness of many, yet there are still some who find grace to subsist, and get through in hardest times; for, in opposition to the former the Lord subjoynes, *But the just shall live.* 6. The way of the godly in patient waiting on God in hard times, is neither a senslesse stupidity, hardening themselves in sorrow, but an exercising, feeling and lively way; nor is it a poor and sorry shift, but a comfortable means of subsistance; for, *the just shall live*, he shal have a lively exercise, and a life of it. 7 Before a man can attain to a comfortable way of bearing trouble and waiting on God in hard times, he must first make sure his personal reconciliation, and being righteous before God, which will be onely when by faith he layeth hold on Christs righteousnesse offered in the Gospel; for, he must be *the just* and that *by faith*, who *shall live by faith* in trouble, and so it is expounded, *Rom.* 1. 17. *Gal.* 3. 11. & 8; The man who is just and righteous by faith in Christ, shall not onely live a life of grace, begun here, by dwelling constantly under the shadow of imputed righteousnesse, whereby he is hid from death and wrath, and by drawing life and vertue out of Christ to quicken his heart, and to enable him for every good word and work, and perfected in glory, but also his faith will carry him through, (not only the snares of prosperity, but) hardest dispensations, without apostasie or fainting; for, while the righteous man walks not by present sense, and by faith takes up God as his father in Christ, studies all the promises made to Saints in every condition, and magnifieth the truth

of them; ſeeth God his Father to be the carver out of all his & the Churches lots, and that every condition is uſeful, and hath a bleſſing in it to the godly; and that waiting on God in his way is the ſure path to a bleſſed iſſue; and withal finding now and then Gods preſence ſenſibly with his Spirit; while, I ſay, the godly man is thus exerciſed, he cannot but have a good life, and be hid from the blaſty winds of tentations, wherewith others are aſſailed and blown over; *The juſt ſhall live by faith*; his faith ſhall afford him a life in hardeſt times, and provide for him in wilderneſſes. 9. Albeit that many may be believing in Chriſt, and ſo be born through, who yet cannot diſcern faith in themſelves, yet ſuch as expect righteouſneſſe through faith in Chriſt, and by faith to be thus ſupported in evil times, ſhould ſtudy the reality and ſincerity of their faith, that it is not a motion or fancy, but real and ſuch as he hath a ſure hold of; for, it is *his faith* by which *the juſt ſhall live*, a faith which he hath made ſure he hath. And for this end, we ought to ſtudy exactly the nature of faith, that neither the preſumptuouſly ſecure, nor fainting ſoul miſtake their own caſe.

Ver. 5. *Yea alſo, becauſe he tranſgreſſeth by Wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his deſire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be ſatisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth upon him all people.*

Followeth to the end of the Chapter, the viſion it ſelf, concerning the deſtruction which was to come upon the *Chaldeans*, propounding for the moſt part in general denunciation of Gods vengeance upon groſs and impenitent ſinners, ſuch as the *Chaldeans* were, wherein the Lord threatneth wrath and ſad judgments to come upon them for the groſſe abominations (ſuch as ambition, covetouſneſſe, oppreſſion, ſenſuality, carnal policie, idolatry, &c.) which abounded amongſt them. This controverſie the Lord layeth out in ſeveral branches, ſometimes repeating the ſame things in ſubſtance, and amplifying them from ſeveral conſiderations, to the end there may be a more diſtinct & clear ſight of the ſinfulneſſe of their ſin, of the vanity of the pretences they founded their courſes on, and of the equity of God judgments ſubjoyned to every branch. The firſt branch of the

the controversie is, that the Chaldeans, and in special, their King, being given to sensuality and ambition, or drunk with pride and ambition as with wine, was insatiable in his Conquests like death and hell, or the grave (of which, *Pro.* 30. 15. 16. *Isa.* 5. 14.) and not being content with his own portion, did labour to adde one Kingdom after another to his dominions, *Dott.* 1. As the godlies honest wrestling through an evil time by faith, is an evidence that God wil reckon with their oppressors: so the Lords reproving and punishing the Apostasie of any within the Church, may assure men that he will not spare wicked enemies; for this is subjoyned to what was said, *ver.* 4. with a *Yea also*, or *How much more*? importing that when he made the just to live by faith, he would also reckon with the *Chaldeans*; and if he discovered and punished the lifted up soul, how much more the *Chaldeans*? See, *Jer.* 25. 29. 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18, 2. The most part of unrenewed great mens actions and enterprises, are consecrated to the service of their vile lusts; For, *Because he transgresseth by wine, and is proud, he keeps not at home*; his great enterprises are undertaken to satisfie sensuality and ambition. 3. Men once inslaved to the service of their lusts, do become brutish, and in a manner renounce their very reason; for, so may the words also be read, *The proud man transgresseth as through wine*; he is drunk with ambition as with wine, which depriveth men of the use of sense and reason. 4. It is a sin flowing from ambition, & a violence offered to nature, which is content with little, when men cannot acquisce in their lot and portion assigned them by God, especially when it is competent, but doe by all means hunt after more; for, it was the *Chaldeans* sin and ambition, that having a Kingdom, yet he *keeps not at home*. 5. It is the Lords judgement upon ambitious men, that the more they go beyond bounds to satisfie their lusts, they become the more insatiable; the more they drink, they are the more thirsty; for, such an one *enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all Nations, and heapeth to him all people.*

Vers. 6. *Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting Proverb against him, and say: Wo to him that encreaseth* that which *is not his: how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay.*

The Lord threateneth that because of these their sins, his judgments should make them contemptible, and matter of derision; insomuch, that even those whom they had oppressed, should insult over them and mock them, and declare them accursed in their unlawful Conquests, (which however they had groaned under them, could not endure long) and in their overcharging, and burdening themselves with the dross of this world. *Doct.* 1. Even the consciences of wicked men, if they were awake or suffered to speak, would give out doom and sentence upon them, and subscribe to the righteousnesse of Gods judgements; for, here he appeals to themselves, *Shall not all these take up a parable, &c.* So also, *v.* 7. 2. When men sinfully endeavour to satisfie their pride and ambition, it is righteous with God to make them most contemptible and ignominious; for, the proud man, *v.* 5 meets with *a parable and taunting proverb*, or becomes a matter of publick derision. 3. However the oppressed and subdued may seem to be far behinde with Conquerors and Oppressors, yet the Lord will in due time cleare that there is but little cause for such an apprehension, and greatest oppressors wil meet with their own stroak, wherein the lowest may insult over them, and they shall be rather the object of pitty then of envy, or on whom any would wish more cruelty; for, *All these*, (to wit, the nations subdued by him, *v.* 5. even all of them, and those who were sorest smitten) *shall take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Wo to him.* See *Isa.* 14. 4, ---12. 4. As unjust Conquest gives a man no right to his Purchase: so it brings on Gods curse, and at last makes the Purchaser an object of derision; *Wo* here may be taken, both for an insulting expression, & a declaration of a curse upon him; *Wo to him* (or *Wo he*, by way of triumphing over him, and laughing at him) *that encreaseth that which is not his.* 5. Though the oppressed ordinarily groan under the oppressor, and wish his end, admiring at Gods patience toward him, yet it may be concluded, that oppression shall not continue so long as either the oppressed or oppressor might expect, and that disappointment of the oppressors hopes of continuance in his way, shal be matter of derision; for, all this is imported in that part of the proverb, *How long?* 6. Albeit oppressors promise to themselves much ease, contentment, pleasure and happinesse, in their great enjoyments, yet they are miserably disappointed; for, riches are in themselves but base, and great abundance of them beyond that which is needful, is to the ambitious but a burden

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and matter of vexation, drawing down the ſoul from God, and intangling and polluting it; and this may point out the miſery of thoſe, who hunt ſo much after theſe things; *Wo to him that ladeth himſelf with thick clay*, that is, baſe riches, which do but burden, pollute, and intangle him.

Ver. 7. *Shall they not riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite thee? and awake that ſhall vex thee? and thou ſhalt be for bonties unto them.*

8. *Becauſe thou haſt ſpoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people ſhall ſpoiſe thee: becauſe of mens blood, and for the violence of the land, of the City, and all that dwell therein.*

The Lord yet declareth his mind concerning theſe ſins, and threatens yet farther, that he will pay them home, as they had ſerved others; for, as the *Chaldeans* had ranged up and down the world like ravenous beaſts: ſo he would ſuddenly raiſe up the *Medes* and *Perſians*, who for preſent were little dream't of to trouble and devour, and prey upon them, *v.* 7. And as they had robbed and ſpoiled many nations, ſo he would ſtir up the remnant of the nations (either ſuch nations as had been reſerved from their fury, or the remainder of the nations, which they had ruined, who ſhould joyn with their enemies,) to prey on them: wherein the r ghteoulneſſe of God ſhould appear, in requiting them for their bloodſhed; and the great deſolation they brought on Cities and Countries wherever they came, and the havock made of the inhabitants, and eſpecially for what they had done to *Jeruſalem*, *Judea*, and the Jews, *v.* 8. *Doct.* 1. The Lords judgments on impenitent ſinners come unexpectedly, and when they leaſt imagine, and that oft-times by inſtruments little thought of, till God raiſe them up and employ them; for, *They ſhall riſe up ſuddenly and awake*, to bite and vex. They may ſeem to be aſleep and ſit very quiet, who ſhall do this work, being imployed of God. 2. Oppreſſors will be made in due time diſciples at their own ſchool, and be made to feele themſelves, what ſad ſtroaks they inflicted on others, & be dealt with as they ſerved others; for, theſe preying beaſts ſhall be *bitten* and *vexed*, or be brought into inextricable difficulties; and

they who *ſpoiled many Nations, ſhall be for booties and be ſpoiled.* 3. Although oppreſſors, ſo long as God permits them to execute his vengeance, prove invincible, yet when their day cometh they will be as feeble as any; for, the *Chaldeans*, who before-time had no more to do but come and gather ſpoile, are now for *booties* unto their enemies, who as eaſily ſpoile them. 4. Although oppreſſors dream that they have all under their feet who could harm them, ſo that none dare open the mouth, or move the wing or peep, yet the Lord hath a ſcourge ready when he pleaſeth to avenge himſelfe upon them; for, *all the remnant of the people ſhall ſpoil thee*, ſaith the Lord; He hath either nations hid from their fury, whom they think not worth their anger, or the very remnants of ſpoiled nations, who if he employ them, will do their turn. 5. When the Lord denounces or executes his judgments on bloody oppreſſors, it is uſeful to ſtudy much his controverſie againſt them, that we may father his judgments aright, may adore the righteouſneſs of God, and may learne from their example to abhor all violent and bloody courſes, eſpecially againſt Gods people, which he ſo ſeverely puniſheth; therefore he ſubjoyns, that all this is *becauſe of mens blood, for the violence of the Land, and of the City, and of all that dwell therein*; which is to be underſtood with ſpecial relation to *Judah*.

Ver. 9. *Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetouſneſſe to his houſe, that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.*

The ſecond branch of Gods controverſie (held forth in general terms) is that out of a deſire to build ſtately Palaces, (as the *Chaldean* did, *Dan.* 29, 30.) or to the end they might eſtabliſh themſelves, and their poſterity in perpetual greatneſſe and wealth, and be exempted from the common miſeries of mankinde, and that no after-times might move them, they are extreamly and ſinfully covetous, for which the Lord pronounceth them accurſed. *Doct.* 1. The certainty of Gods judgments on particular ſinners and enemies, may be read from general denunciations againſt ſuch ſins, it being agreeable to the rule of juſtice, that all who do ſuch things ſhould be ſo puniſhed; therefore the Lord accuſeth and threatneth the *Chaldeans* in a general ſentence; *Wo to him that coveteth*, &c. that it may

appear,

appear how agreeable to justice his sentence against them is, and that every such sinner in after-times may put in his owne name, as if he were the man pointed at. 2. It is a plague on wicked men, when they are given up to imagine that their prosperous condition shall never change, but that they shall be able to secure it for them and theirs for ever; for, this is the prospering wicked mans thought, which brings him to woe, that he will *set his nests on high*, as birds do to secure themselves and young ones, and to *be delivered from the power of evil.* See *Ps.*49.11. 3. Mens vain imaginations and their apprehending that which will never be, and wherein all others have failed, doth oft-times prove a great snare to engage them in courses which otherwise they might see, not only to be sinful, but needlesse and foolish; for, because the worldly man thinks that he can secure uncertain riches to him and his, & can guard against any emergent evils to which mankinde for sin are condemned; therefore *he coveteth an evil covetousnesse, that he may set his nest on high, &c.* and stands upon no meanes which he thinks will make that lye in his right hand prove a truth. 4. Albeit men may lawfully, and in duty should endeavour the good of their posterity, even in external things, and may study to prevent inconveniences, which may prejudice them, yet this endeavour proves sinful, when either it ariseth from, or tends to greedinesse & covetousnesse, or insnares men by drawing them to the use of sinful meanes: for, *Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetuousnesse*, though it were even for *his house*, or *that he may set his nest on high, &c.* 5. It may be sufficient to deter men from courses, that the Word declareth them to be sinful, and that a curse followeth them; for, so doth the Word import here, that it is *an evil covetuousnesse*, and *wo is to him that coveteth it*, therefore men should be far from it.

Ver. 1. *Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.*

11. *For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the Timber shall answer it.*

The Lord expounds his own pronounced *wo*, and threatneth that these their projects should tend to the ignominy of their family

familie; it being juſt they ſhould be ſo dealt with, who ruin ſo many to build up themſelves, and ſell their ſouls to make up their outward eſtates, *v.* 10. and albeit there ſhould be none that durſt complain of them, yet the very materials of their buildings ſhould witneſs againſt them, that they were acquired by robbery, and ſhould agree in a ſort of muſick (heard by Gods juſtice) to cry for vengeance, *ver.* 11. *Doct.* 1. Albeit covetous oppreſſors do oft-times carry themſelves in great ſtate, as the only honourable of the earth, yet their way is in it ſelf ſhameful, and will end in ignominy; *Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe.* 2. Men proſecuting their deſigns by unlawful means, readily fall into the ſnare which they would moſt gladly eſcape; for, the *Chaldean* ſeeking to ſet his houſe on high, not only covets *evil to his houſe*, *v.* 9. but even brings *ſhame* (which he ſeeks to ſhift) to it. 3. There needs no more to pull down the family of the oppreſſor, then his way of ſtudying to make it great; his very building, his neſt is a plague to it, and enoug to make it totter; for, thereby he *conſults ſhame* to it. He could do no more, if he had bended his wits to ruin it. 4. The Politick proje&s of men, who lean to their own wit for compaſſing their ends, and neglect piety, or to wait on God for counſel, will prove ſhameful & ſinful; men who lean to their own wits, will finde, that their moſt ſerious conſultations will leave them in the mire: *Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe*, ſaith the Lord. 5. It is a high degree of impiety, and a clear preſage of ruin, when a man in managing his affairs, caſts off all his love to his neighbours, and not onely mindes himſelf only, but ſtands not upon the prejudice of others, to riſe upon their ruins, or to cut them off, though never ſo many, and he but one, if he think it; may tend to his advantage; for, *Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe by cutting off many people.* 6. As men for the moſt part neglect their ſoules, when they are mad upon their worldly deſigns ſo it is a dangerous caſe when it is ſo, and it will prove a poor bargain in the end, when men having gained never ſo much, yet *have ſinned againſt their ſoul*, which the Lord here not only makes uſe of as a challenge, but declares it as a judgement on the *Chaldean.* 7. Sin and guilt will purſue and finde out the ſinner, and will of it ſelf call for vengeance, though all the world ſhould be ſilent, and not challenge him; for, *the ſtone will cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it.*

Ver.

Ver. 12. *Wo to him that buildeth a Town with bloud, and eſtabliſheth a City by iniquity.*

The third branch of the controverſie, points chiefly at the way of their proſecuting of their covetous and ambitious ends, which was (as one ſin cometh not readily alone, but draweth other ſins with it) by oppreſſion, cutting off of people, and other unjuſt wayes. This courſe the Lord pronounceth to be accurſed, however they gilded it over with ſpecious pretences of publick good, or that thereby they endeavoured to perfect & ſettle their civil State. *Doct.* 1. The Lord looks much unto, and tryes the diſpoſitions of men much, by the meanes they make uſe of in a courſe, whether it be right or wrong in it ſelf; for, the Lord chargeth upon them here, that they carried on their work *with blood, and by iniquity.* 2. Pretence of publick good, and zeal to advance the State and government, is one of the fig tree-leaves wherewith men think to cover their oppreſſion, and make it plauſible, but all in vaine; for, *Wo to him that buildeth a Towne with blood, and eſtabliſheth a City by iniquity.* 3. Though all oppreſſions be not alike horrid in themſelves, and men readily do account themſelves good enough, when they go not the length they might, or that others do in that ſin, yet the Lord will purſue the faireſt way of oppreſſion men can take with vengeance, as being ſinful in it ſelf, and ſometime being more cruel in its lingring way, then the moſt violent oppreſſion in hot blood: for, *Wo to him that eſtabliſheth a City by iniquity*, be what iniquity it will, as well as to *him that buildeth a Towne with blood.*

Ver. 13. *Behold, is it not of the Lord of hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the people ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?*

The Lord explaineth this *Wo*, and denounceth that he ſhould appear eminently againſt them, in making all their endeavours to eſtabliſh themſelves, (wherein they employed many nations, and had much toile, as in a fiery furnace, every head being made bald in their wars, *Ezek.* 29. 18.) to prove not only vain, & to no purpoſe, but to tend alſo to their own prejudice, as one whoſe work is caſt into the fire, loſeth both his materials & his labour and

and endangereth himſelf by following it to get it proſecuted, or reſcued, ſo ſhould they periſh in their hunting after wealth, and with it; See the like threatning, *Jer.* 51. 58. *Doctr.* 1. Men taking ſinful wayes to proſecute their deſignes, may meet with much toile and vexation in their work, as an earneſt of further judgement; for *the people*, (that is, the Chaldeans and many inſtruments employed by them) *labour and weary themſelves.* 2. The utmoſt of mens endeavours ſhall not promote or perfect a work which God is againſt, nor uphold what he hath a minde to overthrow; for, though they *labour and weary themſelves*, yet it ſhall *be for very vanity*, and to no purpoſe. 3. Such as by bloody oppreſſion ſeek to exalt and eſtabliſh themſelves, ſhall not only loſe their labour, but incur further dammage by their attempt and loſe themſelves, their work, & the materials which they had to begin their work upon; for, the Chaldeans *ſhall labour in the very fire*, which ſhall not only breed them toil & pain in labouring, but ſhall devoure all their conqueſts, themſelves, and the Kingdom of *Babel*, which they had when they began their tyranny. 4. The Lord will ſo order his judgments upon violent oppreſſors, as that his hand ſhall be viſibly and remarkably ſeen by all, to be the inflicter of them, and he ſhall prove himſelfe omnipotent, by fruſtrating men of their wicked purpoſes, and conſuming all their labours; for, *Behold, is it not of the Lord of hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, &c.*

Ver. 14. *For the Earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the* Lord, *as the waters cover the ſea.*

The Lord ſubjoynes a reaſon to this ſentence, clearing how he ſhould be ſo much ſeen in this judgment, to wit, that however he ſeemed to let his own Name and glory be obſcured, when he ſuffered the Chaldeans to oppreſſe the world, and lead his people into captivity, yet in due time he would make his glory ſo conſpicuous in their juſt deſtruction, and his powerful aſſerting of *Judah* into liberty, as the Nations ſhould be filled with the knowledge therof, as the ſea is full of water: & all this as a type and pledge of the glory to be revealed in Chriſt, & the knowledge of his Name then to be communicated. *Doct.* 1. When oppreſſors do proſper, and the Lords people with the reſt of the world are brought into bondage by them, the Lords

glory

glory is engaged for his appearing againſt them in due time; for, it is ſubjoyned as a reaſon of the Chaldeans evil ſucceſſe; for, *the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, &c.* 2. The greatneſſe of oppreſſors doth contribute to illuſtrate and ſet forth the glory of God in bringing them down, and therefore is rather an argument why the Lord ſhould deſtroy them, then any hinderance to it; the Lord will bring down the Chaldeans: for in ſo doing, *the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of his glory*, See *Pſ.*9.16. 3. As God is moſt glorious in himſelf, ſo he will make his glory to ſhine in the deliverance of his people, though for a time he ſuffer them to be in bondage; for, in bringing back *Judah* at the ruine of *Babylon*, *the Earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* See, *Pſ.*126.2. 4. All the glorious manifeſtations of God againſt his enemies, and for his people of old, were but ſhadowes of what he manifeſted, and doth manifeſt in and by Chriſt in the latter dayes; and any effects of theſe his workes which appeared among his people, or the Gentiles, were but a taſte of what the glory of God ſhining in Chriſt, and made known to the world by the Goſpel, ſhould produce among Jewes and Gentiles; therefore this prophecy is applyed to the dayes of the Goſpel, *Iſai.*11.9. as getting then full accompliſhment.

Ver. 15. *Wo to him that giveth his neighbour drink: that putteſt thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo, that thou mayeſt looke on their nakedneſſe.*

The fourth branch of the controverſie, if we take it properly holds forth a denunciation of vengeance to come upon them for their beaſtly luxury and ſenſuality, uſual in the Babyloniſh Court, & that not only in their own perſons, but they did draw one another to drunkenneſs, that ſo they might mock at their infirmities, which they could not hide in their drunkenneſs (alluding to that of *Noah*, *Gen.* 9.21,22.) or that they might abuſe one another in an unnatural way, through their drunkenneſs; And ſo it teacheth, 1. When men abuſe their proſperity to luxury, it is an evidence of a curſe upon them and it; ſo it was with the Chaldeans: *Wo to him that gives his neighbour drinke, &c.* as having no other end wherfore he troubled all the world but thus to abuſe himſelf and others. 2. Sin is come to a great

height

height, and neer a curſe, when men do entice & draw others to the ſame exceſſe of riot with themſelves; for, *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drinke, that putteſt thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo* 3. It is a beaſtly diſpoſition, to take pleaſure in making men abuſe themſelves by drink, a *Wo* is denounced againſt it; nor is it a mark of any true kindneſſe, as the prophane reckon, but it is done, *that they may look on their nakedneſſe* and bring it out to open view. 4. Intemperance is an uſher to let in any other vice; for when a man is drunk, diſcovering of, or *looking on nakedneſſe* will not be accounted ſhameful, nor unnatural filthineſſe an abomination. But the words may alſo be taken figuratively, and ſo the ſcope is to taxe them for their endeavours, by Politick practices and faire promiſes, to engage their neighbours in their undertakings, and that as they were drunk with ambition themſelves, ſo they filled their neighbours with the like principles, & drunken heaps of ſharing in their victories, though indeed they minded nothing leſs, but if any inconvenience ſhould befal their Confederates, they would deſpiſe them, or be ready themſelves upon occaſion, to bring them unto ſlavery, and to make them baſe. Thus doth the whore make the world drunken with her Idolatrous cup, *Rev.* 17. and thus did *Nineveh* entice the world with her whoredom and witchcrafts, *Nah.* 3. 4. This interpretation teacheth. 1. Great men in the world are ordinarily ſo infatuated with their hopes and projects that like drunken men they reel, & cannot be ſober, nor ruled by ſound principles: for, the Chaldeans are thus drunken, and they *make their neighbours drunken alſo*, as well as themſelves. 2. Carnal policy and intereſt is the greateſt Steersman of humane affaires among men, which frequently brings a curſe on the uſers thereof; for, *Wo to him who thus gives his neighbour drink, &c.* 3. No true kindneſſe can be expected from men who walk politickly and on intereſts of State, pretend what they will; for all that ſuch do this way to others, is, *that they may look on their nakedneſſe.*

Ver. 16. *Thou art filled with ſhame for glory: drinke thou alſo, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lords right hand ſhall be turned unto thee, and ſhameful ſpewing ſhall be on thy glory.*

Whatever

Whatever way we expound the challenge, the Lords judgement is very equitable, that all theſe courſes ſhould tend rather to their ignominy then their honour; and that as they had been Butlers to draw others to ſenſuality, and to intoxicate and allure them to joyne in their oppreſſions of the Church and the world; ſo the Lord ſhould bring about the Cup of his wrath to them, and make them drink of it to ſatiety, whereby they ſhould be as contemptible, as when a drunken man is lying naked, and that with his uncircumciſed foreskin (which was an abomination to the Church) uncovered, or when he is polluting all his bravery or ſtately houſe with his filthy vomite, *Doct.* 1. The ſinful courſes which men follow to advance their greatneſſe would appear moſt ignominious to a cleer diſcerner, and will at laſt be ſeen to be ſo, to the conviction of all: for, *Thou art filled with ſhame for glory*, ſaith the Lord. 2. The meaſuring of all afflictions and judgements is in Gods hand, ſo as none can adde to them or diminiſh from them, nor get them ſhifted, when God layeth them on; therefore they are called *a Cup*, which is a ſet meaſure, and *the Cup of the Lords right hand*, which is irreſiſtibly powerful. See *Jer.* 25. 28. 3. As the Lord will at laſt bring about the ſtorme of vengeance upon the head of wicked men, who were inſtruments to execute it upon others; ſo they drinking laſt of the Cup, and therefore nearer the dregs, and having been eminently wicked, and withal, being oft-times without the Church, (as the uncircumciſed) and ſo without God, their ſtroak ſhall be more eminently ignominious then any others; for, when *the Cup of the Lords right hand is turned to them*, (after others have drunke thereof, *Jer.* 25. 26.) *then they ſhall drinke, and their foreskinnes ſhall be uncovered, and ſhameful ſpewing ſhall be on their glory:*

Ver. 17. *For the violence of* Lebanon *ſhall cover thee, and the ſpoile of beaſts which made them afraid, becauſe of mens blood, and for the violence of the Land, of the City, and of all that dwell therein.*

To cleer the equity of all theſe judgments the Lord ſubjoyns and recapitulates his controverſie, threatning that the Chaldeans

ans ſhould be overwhelmed, for the violence done to the Land of *Iſrael*, bordering upon *Lebanon*, or the Temple made of the wood of *Lebanon*, yea and for the very deſtruction of that forreſt, and ſpoiling and affrighting of the beaſts there, as they came through it; and cut down the timber for the ſiege of *Ieruſalem*, and for their beaſtly and bloody violence upon the Inhabitants of city and country wherever they came, eſpecially in *Judea*. Or it may be thus interpreted; that as in the forreſt of *Lebanon*, beaſts are hunted, affrighted, and deſtroyed, ſo ſhould they be purſued and ruined becauſe of their horrid cruelty & violence, and ſo it is the ſame in ſubſtance with *v.* 7, 8. *Doct.* 1. It is neceſſary that we ſtudy over & over again the Lords controverſie with impenitent ſinners, that we may adore his equity in puniſhing, and tremble at his ſeverity in ſo much inſiſting to puniſh for ſin; for, therefore are their ſins repeated and threatning renewed. 2. Such as do like brute beaſts, trouble and vexe all the creatures, and make havock of all wherever they come, and eſpecially do oppreſſe the people of God, may expect to be accordingly dealt with; and that without repentance they ſhall be irrecoverably deſtroyed; for, ſo do theſe words; taking in both expoſitions, teach us, that they ſhall be covered or overwhelmed with calamity, for their violence againſt the very creatures and the Church; See *Iſai.* 14. 6, 7, 8. and for their violence ſhall be hunted and purſued as wilde beaſts (whom they in their actions reſembled) uſe to be by hunters.

Ver. 18. *What profiteth the graven Image, that the maker thereof hath graven it: the molten Image, and a teacher of lyes, that the maker of his work truſteth therein, to make dumbe Idols?*

The laſt branch of the controverſie (held forth alſo in generall termes,) in their Idolatry, & particularly their making of Idols and Images, to repreſent what they acknowledged for a Deity, and to be worſhipped in that Religious ſtate, the vanity of which he proves from their unprofitableneſſe & inability to teach any thing of a deity; for however the formers of them take much pains on them, & when they have done truſt in them, and ſet them up above men in Gods room, yet they have no authority

rity so to do. *Doct.* 1. Few of those who receive greatest things of this world from God, do acknowledge him for them, but rather follow Idol-gods to his dishonour, and in defiance of him; for, so did the Chaldeans, as it is imported here, and so the most part of *Adams* posterity do. 2. In a time when Idolaters do prevail, & the true Church is brought into bondage by them it is necessary to study much the vanity of Idolatry, and to set it out so to the world, to the end that neither the wicked may dream of being exempted from vengeance by their Idols, nor the godly stumble at the prosperity of such as follow them; for, to these ends doth the doctrine of the vanity of Idols here set forth, tend. 3. Besides fearful Idolatry committed in the world by mens taking that for their god which is no god; (whereof they cannot be free, who perform religious worship, due to God only, to any creature whatsoever) the world is also guilty of Idolatry by making of Idols or Images for representing an invisible Deity, and the object of their Religious worship, be it what it will, and by worshipping of them in that Religious state and relation; this is it which is expressely reproved in the Chaldaans here, that they not only accounted that to be their god which was no god, but either a creature or a feigned thing, but that they had *graven Images*, and *molten Images*; not that they acknowledged these to be their gods, but that they were represented by them, and that their god were to be worshipped in & by these Images: & this challenge is expressed in general termes, that all who make use of such devices in Religious worship, (be the ultimate and last object of their worship what it will) may take their reproofe. 4. Whatever men may conceit of Images, as many wayes useful for exciting of them, and keeping them in remembrance of a Deity, yet upon narrow search it will be found that they are unprofitable, if not pernicious; as every thing in worship, which is not instituted of God for profit, proveth; for he puts it to any unbiassed conscience to tell, *what profiteth the graven Image?* 5. The original and Authors of Images prove the vanity of putting them in any Religious state: for, since it hath the maker thereof among men, *what profiteth it?* for it cannot be God, *Hos.* 8. 6. and albeit the maker thereof give it a being, and hath graven it curiously, yet he hath no authority to command it to be worshipped, nor can such an Author make it blesse the worshippers; and it is folly in the maker thereof to trust therein, yea, it doth sufficiently disgrace any point of Religion, that it

is of mans making or deviſing. 6. Albeit that men do commend Images as books for the ignorant, whereby they may be helped to take up a deity, yet they can teach or repreſent nothing of God; but only the makers phantaſie; yea, they cauſe the minde to wander from the true and ſaving knowledge of God, as he is revealed in his word, and do imprint falſe and carnal conceptions of a deity; for, *the molten Image is a teacher of lyes.* 7. Though ſuch as make uſe of Images to repreſent a deity, or that which they worſhip, do imagin that they reſt not upon the repreſentation, but do aſcend up by it to the thing repreſented: yet herein their heart deceiveth them; for whatever they pretend in their thoughts, yet practically they honour them as their god, and whatever they pretend to offer unto God in and by them, is expounded by God as offered really unto them; for *the maker of his work,* (though he might have made any other thing of the materials) *truſteth therein.* 8. Such as worſhip graven Images, do proclaim their own brutiſhneſſe, and that they are as great blocks as theſe which they adore, when they exalt that which is below themſelves, to be above themſelves, & in Gods room; for, what a brutiſhneſſe is it in a man endued with ſenſe and reaſon, *to make himſelfe dumbe Idols,* which have no ſenſe at all?

Ver. 19. *Wo unto him that ſayeth to the wood, Awake: to the dumb ſtone, Ariſe, it ſhall teach: behold, it is laid over with gold and ſilver, and there is no breath at all in the midſt of it.*

Upon what hath been ſaid, the Lord denounceth a wo upon them who emplore Idols for help or direction; ſeeing that however they be curiouſly framed, yet their vile matter remaineth ſtill the ſame, nor can the Artificers skill put life into them to move themſelves, far leſſe to help others. *Doct.* 1. Image-worſhippers proclaim their own wretchedneſs, in that they are given up to a reprobate ſenſe, void of diſcerning: and they ſhall have many ſorrowful diſappointments who expect a remedy from them in hard caſes, and in the end ſhall be confounded by God, who will not give his praiſe of being an helper & directer of the children of men to graven Images; For, *wo to him that ſaith to the wood, Awake, to the dumb ſtone, Ariſe, it ſhall teach.*

2. Al-

2. Albeit the vanity of worshipping Idols and Images be palpably grosse, so that seriously to consider it, is sufficient to refute it, yet such is mans stupidity, when he delights not to retaine God in his knowledge, as he needs much stirring up, to take notice of the errour of his way; for, albeit a little paines discover that their Idols are *wood* and *stone*, and that *there is no breath in the midst of it*; and consequently, that it is in vaine to worship such; yet man must be called to *behold* this, and must have it often pointed out to him. 3. Outward pomp and splendor in the exercise of Religion, though it be much taking with natural hearts, yet it is not the thing God looks to, but how his own prescribed rule is followed; and what reality is there in such shewes? for, saith he, *their Idol is laid over with gold and silver, and yet there is no breath at all in the midst of it.*

Ver. 20. *But the Lord is in his holy Temple, let all the Earth keep silence before him.*

In opposition to the vanity of Idols the true God is commended, who dwels in heaven, and manifests himself in the Church by the signs of his presence, of his own appointing, & by prescribing rules of his own worship, whose authority and greatnesse is such, as may make all the world give over their disputing for Idols, and submit to his doctrine, and may cause them to stand in awe to come in opposition to him, or to wrong his people, when they should be scattered amongst them. *Doct.* 1. The consideration of the vanity of Idols, and misery of Idol-worshippers, ought to commend the true God to his Church, and set out their own happinesse, who have him not only reigning in heaven, but in the midst of them, and know how to serve him acceptably according to his will; therefore it is subjoyned to what hath been said, *But the Lord is in his holy Temple.* 2. The authority of the true God, and his presence among his people being seriously thought upon, will call for much reverence, will silence all debates against his revealed will, and may terrifie men from being in opposition to him or his people: for, *the Lord is in his holy Temple, let all the Earth keep silence before him*; where silence is the badge of their reverencing his majesty and authority, as *Job* 29.9.

## CHAP. III.

IN this Chapter, the Prophet having heard Gods minde, concerning both the Church and the Chaldeans, expresseth his exercise upon the whole of that which hath been revealed to him, in a way of meditation or prayer, penned for the edification and direction of the Church, in the times they were to meet with, *v.* 1. wherein out of his deep apprehension, and fear of the approaching stroak, having prayed for preservation & moderation of severity in their captivity, till the time prefixed for their deliverance should come, *v.* 2. He gathers grounds of faith, that there should be a deliverance from their future captivity, from the Lords glorious manifestations of old for his people, in carrying them from *Egypt* through the wilderneſſe, to the possession of the promised land, and setling and securing them in it, *ver.* 3.——15. after which he changeth his stile, and instead of praying, expects that present feares should end in future confidence, *v.* 16. and glorieth in the hope of preservation and deliverance, *v.* 17. 18, 19. ——In testimony whereof he commends his meditation to be sung with joy, *v.* 19.

Ver. 1. A *Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet upon Sigionoth.*

The Inscription of this exercise holds forth the Prophets scope, which is to pen a prayer to God, in reference to the ensuing calamities, such a prayer (as the word signifieth,) as is made by a Supplicant to a Judge, which because it was penned in Meeter for the help of memory, therefore the tune is prescribed, the clear signification whereof though it be uncertain, yet that which cometh neerest to likelihood is, that the Prayer being endited in a composed & mixt Meeter, it was to be sung with variable tunes & instruments fitted accordingly. *Doct.* 1: when

when the Lords people abuſe their priviledges, they may be put to plead for them before the Lords tribunal by prayer, and be content to hold faſt theſe things by faith, which ſometime they had full poſſeſſion of; for *Habakkuk* and the Church are put to prayer for their very being, and to deprecate the total ruine of Gods work. 2. It is the duty of all in a time of imminent or incumbent judgements, to ſtirre up themſelves and others, in their ſtations, to get the ſpirit of prayer, that being exerciſed in religious duties, they may be kept from declining or fainting, and may be preſerved from the judgement of ſenſeleſſe ſtupidity, which uſually attends ſuch times, *Ezek.* 24.22. Therefore doth the Prophet by his example ſtirre up, and by this publick forme (preſcribed by the Spirit of God, and therefore lawfull) direct the Jewes how to imploy themſelves in their captivity. 3. The people of God are not to expect that their prayers will hold in one tenor under trouble, but as their exerciſe will be various, in fearing, believing, trembling, rejoycing, &c. ſo their prayers may begin low, riſe high, fall low, and riſe high again; for, ſo much may be gathered from the nature of this meeter, wherein the prayer is penned, or tune to which it was ſung, called *Sigionoth*, or variable; as of one wandring here and there, and not keeping one way: This appeareth clearly in the prayer it ſelfe, or the Prophets ſubſequent exerciſe, and ſuch variety makes the conſort and melody of that ſpiritual exerciſe more ſweet.

Ver. 2. *O Lord, I have heard thy ſpeech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of the yeers, in the midſt of the yeares make known, in wrath remember mercy.*

This verſe containes that which is properly the Prophets prayer in this exerciſe; the ſumme whereof is, that being afraid of Gods threatned and imminent judgement of the Captivity, (to which he ſubmits without more contending) he prayeth that the Lord would not ſuffer his Church nor his work in it to come to nothing by their captivity; but would, during that time, keep in their life by undeſerved tokens of his favour, till he ſhould deliver. And that notwithſtanding their ſinnes procuring wrath, he would magnifie

magnifie his mercy toward them. *Doct.* 1. When judgements are threatned againſt the Church, albeit ſhe may believe love in them, and that ſhe is the Lords whatever come, yet threatned trouble ought to be an exerciſe unto her, and ought to make her humble under Gods threatning hand, and tremble to deal with ſuch a bitter cup; *O Lord*, ſaith he, *I have heard thy ſpeech*, to wit, concerning the Captivity, *and was afraid.* Both the Majeſty of the ſpeaker, and the matter of the ſpeech did affright him. 2, As prayer to God is the kindly vent of all the godlies feares, without which fear might readily cruſh them, and by which the thing feared is either removed, or bleſſed, and made more eaſie and comfortable unto them; ſo prayer will not ſpeak well in trouble, where there is not ſome ſenſe of Gods word threatning, or of his hand ſtriking at the root of it; for the Prophet being afraid, ſubjoynes, *O Lord, revive*, as the iſſue and reſult of his feare, and as being a ſuitable and fit time and diſpoſition for prayer. 3, When the Lord hath diſcloſed his purpoſe, concerning his peoples being in trouble, it is the duty of the godly to ſubmit without contending, and make them forbearing of it, till Gods prefixed time of deliverance come; for, the Prophet ſuppoſeth that the appointed yeares of the Captivity were to come, and doth not quarrel as formerly, but prayeth that the Church may be borne through in that time. This were a way to make many a croſſe eaſie, which our quarrelling makes inſupportable. See *Jer.* 29,5.6. 4. The people of God are ſometimes left to lie under a long continued tract of trouble, to the end they may be narrowly tryed, and may have much ſorrow to be repayed with joy, *Pſal.*90.15. for this trouble did endure for years, even ſeventy of them. 5. Beſides the Lords general relation to all his creatures as his handy work, he hath a peculiar relation to his Church and people, whoſe calling to be his people, and their building up and eſtabliſhing in that priviledge, is his own peculiar worke, and amongſt whom his elect are made anew by him, in a worke of redemption and regeneration, ſo that they become new creatures, and the worke of his hands, *Iſai.*45.11. In the midſt of whom alſo he hath a work of his Ordinances and Kingdome to be preſerved and carried on: Which relation, as the Church ought to acknowledge it, and hold all ſhe hath of him, and make his worke the matter of her chiefe care in trouble; ſo this intereſt doth indeare the Lords people to,

him

him, and is a cauſe why he will not let them go to ruine, and ſo loſe all that himſelfe hath done; for, ſo doth the Prophet reaſon, *revive thy work.* 6. The Lords people and worke may by reaſon of long and ſore Captivity, and (poſſibly) deſertion accompanying it, be redacted into ſuch extremities, as all may ſeem to be in peril of ruine, and the faith of the godly in peril to faint, and give it over: There may be ſuch low ebbes, as may put the godly to pray, *O Lord, revive*, or *preſerve alive.* 7. As the Lord both can, and will preſerve his work, and people, who wait on him, from ruine, and that in the midſt of extremities: ſo the Lords doing of this ought to be much eſteemed; therefore, the Prophet reſolving on Captivity, maketh it his ſuite which he hath warrant and ground of hope to aske, and the granting whereof will be refreſhful, though the trouble otherwiſe be preſſing: *O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of thy yeares.* 8. It is a very refreſhful diſpenſation, and which the people of God have warrant to look for, that the Lord will ſeaſon and ſweeten their times of trouble, with ſome evidences of his favour, either in their boſomes, or by ſome token for good in his providence. Therefore the Prophet is directed to pray further, *in the midſt of the yeares make known*, to wit, his wonted favour, by ſome manifeſtation; and was anſwered in the Lords raiſing up of Prophets to them in *Babylon*, and by raiſing up the head of their King, about the midſt of the yeares of their Captivity, 2 *Kings* 25.27, &c. as a pledge of their future liberation; and by other favours beſtowed upon them. 9. As the Lords proceeding in wrath againſt his people would undoe them; ſo the apprehenſion of Gods juſt anger againſt them for their ſinnes, is a great hinderance to them in their prayers: Therefore the Propher, when he thinks on wrath, is made abruptly to cut his prayer, that he may runne and deprecate it; *make known*, (ſaith he, not expreſſing what) *in wrath remember mercy.* 10. As the Lords juſt indignation againſt ſinne doth not ſo tranſport him, as that he will forget mercy, or that he will deal in ſtrict juſtice, without all moderation, with his afflicted people: ſo this may give warrant to all thoſe who are ſenſible of ſin, and of wrath due, or inflicted for it, to flee to his free favour, and to pray with the Prophet, *In wrath remember mercy.* And teacheth all to magnifie God, when this prayer is anſwered in any ſort, and that God doth mixe a cup of wrath with any mercy or moderation.

Ver. 3.

Ver. 3. *God came from Teman, and the holy One from mount Paran, Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the Earth was full of his praiſe.*

4. *And his brightneſſe was as the light: he had hornes comming out of his hand, aud there was the hiding of his power.*

The Prophet that he may ſtrengthen his own, & the godlies faith, in aſſurance of an anſwer to his prayer, gathereth together ſeveral grounds whereupon he expects it; which are taken from the manifeſtations of God in delivering his people from *Egypt*, in carrying them through the Wilderneſſe, and ſetling them in the promiſed Land; expecting by faith that the Lord (being unchangeable, ſtill the ſame, and the people ſtill his) will repeate theſe in their future delivery; and ſo lifts up his heart above all difficulties in the captivity, or that might impede their reſtitution; as looking to what had been done, as pledges of what God would do, before his Word failed, or they periſhed.

Gods glorious manifeſtations of old, among and for his people, are branched out in ſeveral particulars; whereof the firſt (agreeing much with *Deut*, 33. 2.) is the Lord manifeſting of himſelf on Mount *Sinai*, at the giving of the Law, and on the hills adjacent in the deſert, through which he marched after giving of the Law, before his people, as their confederate God, in glory and Majeſty like himſelfe; inſomuch that the ſplendor, wherewith he was invironed, filled heaven & earth, & was bright as any light: & though theſe rayes like horns which ſhined forth from his hands or ſides when he appeared, did point out his power, yet but darkly; as being but a veile caſt over his glorious power which in it ſelfe is incomprehenſible, as that light could not be ſtedfaſtly looked upon by the infirme and eaſily dazled eyes of man. *Doct.* 1. It is a thriving way in prayer, not only to put up deſires to God, to perſwade him, but to gather arguments whereby to confirme our own faith in the hope of ſpeeding, which will make us both cheerful in prayer, and quiet, having done our duty; Therefore though all this exerciſe be called prayer, *ver.* 1. yet after a ſhort ſuite, *ver.* 2. the Prophet makes the ſtudy of arguments of faith his chief work here, See 1 *John* 5. 14.

14, 15. 2. The Church is a ſtorehouſe of experience for a time of need; ſhe hath treaſures of inſtances of what God hath done, ready to be repeated againe in a new extremity; for, the Prophet repeats here works done of old, which he lookes upon as pledges of the like in this new ſtrait. 3. Gods glorious manifeſtations of himſelfe in, and for his Church, ought to be joyned with the conſideration of his holineſſe; and his glory and ſplendor ought to ſet out his perfection in purity, that the Church may fall in love therewith, and ſtudy conformity thereto; for, appearing thus he is *God the holy one.* 4. The Lords glory amongſt his people may ſhine brightly in a Wilderneſſe, which will not obſcure it when he lets it out; for, all this glory ſhined in the barren deſarts of *Teman*, or *the South*, which is a part of *Seir*, or *Edom*, *Obad.* 9. *Amos* 1. 12. *Deut.* 33. 2. *Judges* 5. 4. and *mount Paran*, a place alſo neere to *Seir*, *Gen.* 14, 6. where *Iſhmael* dwelt, *Gen.* 21. 21. and where *Iſrael* encamped ſhortly after they came from *Sinai*, *Num.* 10. 12. and 12. 16. and therefore joyned with the former, *Deut.* 33. 2. 5. The glory of God revealed unto and for the Church, is not to be looked upon in a tranſient way, but ought gravely and ſeriouſly to be conſidered, till our hearts be affected and warmed with it. Therefore is *Selah* (no where uſed, but in the *Pſalms* and this Chapter) ſubjoyned, to ſhew the weight of this matter, and how our hearts ſhould pauſe and dwell upon it, till it grow upon our hands; yea, to ſhew that a ſight of him indeed, will give our hearts ſuch a ſet, as they muſt ſtand and breath a while. 6. As the excellency of all the creatures is from God, and doth daily ſet out his glory; ſo when he is pleaſed to appear in any ſpeciall manifeſtation, it doth obſcure all glory beſide, and ſet him out as onely praiſe-worthy; for, in this progreſs, *His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praiſe* in a ſingular way, beſide what ordinarily appeareth of his glory in theſe, which this diſpenſation did in a ſort obſcure and tranſcend. 7. We ought to commend the infinite wiſdom of God and his tender reſpect to fraile man, that he hath choſen fit means and inſtruments of Miniſters and Ordinances, whereby to make himſelf known as we are able to bear, conſidering that immediate manifeſtaſtion of him who dwelleth in light inacceſſible, would but undoe us, while we are in our mortal bodies; for, when he appeared, *his brightneſſe was as the light* filling heaven and earth, as if it had been all a ſun;

a ſun; This was acknowledged by *Iſrael*, when they could not endure this glory, nor hear God ſpeak, *Exod.* 19. 16. & 20. 18, 19. And by *Eliah*, in wrapping his face in his mantle, when God appeared to him. 1. *Kings* 19. 13. 18. The Lords moſt glorious manifeſtations of himſelf to mortal creatures, are but as vailes caſt over his infinitly glorious eſſence, and attributes, and ſo to ſay, an obſcuring of himſelf, that he may reveale himſelf to their capacity; yea, it much commends the glory of God, and may help our faith if we conſider that the moſt glorious effects of his power are but as a vaile caſt over his glorious omnipotency, who can do far above what we ask or conceive; for, *he had hornes come out of his hands*, or glorious manifeſtations of his power ſhining in theſe glorious rayes, wherewith he arrayed himſelf on every ſide, and yet *there was the hiding of his power.* 9. The Lords taking his Church by the hand, when ſhe came out from the pots of *Egypt*, and entring with her in a Covenant of marriage, and that in ſo glorious ſtate, as teſtified what eſtimation he had of her, and what reſpect he would put upon her, gives warrant to the Church in all ages, to believe, that the glorious Lord will not deſpiſe her in her low eſtate, but notwithſtanding his great Majeſty, and her baſeneſſe, he will appear for her, will deliver her out of trouble, will let out tokens of favour to her, by which he will put reſpect upon her, and will renue his covenant with her; Therefore the Prophet by faith looks to all this as forthcomming for the Church in her ſecond captivity.

Verſ. 5. *Before him went the peſtilence, and burning coales went forth at his feet.*

The Second branch of the deſcription of Gods glorious manifeſtation is taken from his attendants, for executing his judgements; he had *the Peſtilence and burning coals*, (that is deſtroying lightnings, as *Pſal.* 18. 12. & 78. 48. or peſtilential burning diſeaſes, as *Deut.* 32. 24.) which as Lackeys ran before him, and at his feet, wherever he went, ready to be hunted out at his command; at which both the Egyptians and themſelves in the Wilderneſſe had proofe, *Exod.* 9. 3. 23. 24. *Num.* 11. 1. 43, 44, 45, 46. and elſewhere, and in naming

of

of theſe plagues, as being moſt devouring, other plagues are not to be excluded, but underſtood. *Doct.* 1. The glory of the Lord doth ſhine, and is to be ſeen and adored in his works of judgement, as well as in other acts; for, The Prophet brings it in here, to ſet out his glory, that *before him went the Peſtilence*, &c. 2. It is a farther manifeſtation of Gods glory, and ought to be a ground of the Churches faith, that he can and will when he pleaſeth, find wayes to plague enemies, though ſecond cauſes and probable meanes faile; ſo doth the Prophet reckon while he brings in *Peſtilence and burning coales*, as ready to do that work. 3. It is a part of our duty in glorifying God, to acknowledge all afflictions to be as his pages, ready to come and go at his command, that ſo our eyes may be moſt on him under them; for, ſo doth the prophet ſet out his glory, that theſe plagues *went before him, and forth at his feet*, attending on his progreſſe. 4. Faith may ſafely gather from judgements executed for ſinnes of old, that judgement ſhall be executed for the ſame ſinnes againe committed; and from judgements inflicted on the Church when ſhe ſinnes, that undoubtedly the ſinnes of enemies will not be paſt over; Therefore the Prophet recordeth what had been done on *Egypt* and themſelves, as a certain pledge of *Babels* ruine, that the Church may be delivered.

Verſ. 6. *He ſtood and meaſured the earth: he beheld and drove aſunder the nations: and the everlaſting mountains were ſcattered, the perpetual hills did bow, his wayes are everlaſting.*

A third inſtance of his glory of old, appeared in his dividing the Land of *Canaan*, by *Moſes* and *Joſhuah* to the twelve Tribes; which he *ſtood* and meaſured, that is, not onely fixed their reſt when they came there, after they had long wandered with the Ark of his preſence; but he openly manifeſted himſelfe to be a ſoveraign Lord, and their God in doing of it, and that he needed not any deliberation, or time to it; His glory alſo ſhined in putting them eaſily in poſſeſſion of that Land, ſcattering the Nations with a look of his countenance, in anger, whereby the Lord (who can if he pleaſe, remove fixed mountains) did overthrow, and ſubdue the inhabitants of that hilly

hilly country, whoſe poſſeſſion had been ancient and of old, (as the hills which they poſſeſſed) and whoſe ſtable condition, like the hills alſo, did promiſe them a perpetuity. And no wonder; for his wayes and purpoſes concerning his people, *Deut* 32, 8. were more ancient then their poſſeſſion; and God being eternal, and ſtil the ſame, will yet be forth-comming in the like need. *Doct.* 1. God who is the ſoveraign King of all Nations, and who caſts down, and lifts up whom he pleaſeth, will manifeſt himſelfe in carving out, even the outward lot and condition of his people, according to the tenour of his Covenant with them for that purpoſe; for ſo he proved *when he ſtood and meaſured the earth*, or *the Land* to his *Iſrael*, to whom he had promiſed it, and ſo made them hold it by the ſure tenour of his free gift. And ſo doth the Prophet expect the Lord will do yet. 2. It is a notable encouragement to faith, and ſets out Gods glory, that look what is moſt difficult in mens ſight, and may redact them to greateſt extremities, yet is moſt eaſie to God, when he puts hand to it; for *he ſtood* of old and deſigned a Land; he but *beheld and drave aſunder the Nations*; and albeit their poſſeſſion was neer as ancient, and appeared as ſtable as the *everlaſting mountains and perpetual hills*, yet they were *ſcattered and did bow*. 3. The Lords eminent appearing in bringing about a mercy for his people, according to the tenor of the Covenant, gives a ground of claime, when it comes in hazzard againe, and is a pledge that God will aſſert and maintaine his own glorious purchaſe, though for a time it ſeeme to bee plucked out of his hand; for, ſo would the Prophet gather, that the Lord who had not onely promiſed, but gloriouſly put his people in poſſeſſion of that land, would bring them back to it againe in due time. And to this purpoſe doth *Jehoſhaphat* alſo reaſon, 2 *Chron.* 20. 11. 4. Albeit that mens having a long and firme-like poſſeſſion of what is the Churches right, may be great trial of faith, yet the ſtudy of Gods unchangeable nature, and his eternal and irreſiſtible purpoſes will ſtrongly ſupport faith; Therefore the Prophet, in oppoſition to the *Chaldeans* power, and long poſſeſſion. *Iſ.* 49.24. holdeth forth Gods eternal purpoſes concerning the Church, which as of old they had overturned the *Canaanites*, ſo yet they would take place in all generations, *Pſal.* 33. 11. In both theſe reſpects *his wayes are everlaſting*, as being more ancient and ſure then the *Cananites* poſſeſſion, and yet the ſame unchageably to overrurne the *Chaldeans*.

Ver.

Verſ. 7. *I ſaw the tents of Cuſhan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.*

A fourth inſtance of this glory ſhined in the terror which Gods preſence among his people, put upon their enemies, and all round about, inſtanced in theſe of *Cuſhan* and *Midian*, whoſe habitation was in tents and under curtains; This was accompliſhed, partly when in *Iſraels* march through the Wilderneſſe, all theſe *Arabians* (deſcended of *Cuſh*, as well as the *Ethiopians* on the other ſide of the red ſea) and *Midianites*, who lived thereabout were affrighted, as not knowing on whom they would fall; which feare alſo took hold on other Nations, *Exod.* 15. 14, 15. *Num.* 22. 3, 4. *Joſh.* 2. 9, 10. 11. and put them in great affliction and terrour; and partly it was accompliſhed in that notable defeat of *Cuſhan Riſhathaim*, by *Othniel*, *Judg.* 3. 8. 9. 10. and of the *Midianites* by *Gideon*, *Judg.* 7. All this the Prophet looks back upon by faith, and ſeeth the Lord ready to do the like. *Doct.* 1. It ſerveth to illuſtrate Gods glory, and ſtrengthen the faith of his Church in beleeving promiſes, to conſider that God can diſcover the vanity of creatures, by making ſtout-hearted nations to tremble, that he can fight againſt men with his terrour, and can diſcover himſelf terrible in and for his Church, when ſhee is in a Wilderneſſe and low eſtate; for, this is aray of his glory and a ground of the Prophets faith, that the *tents* of Cuſhan *were in affliction* (or *under vanity*, which this terrour diſcovered to be in them) *and the curtains of the land of* Midian *did tremble.* 2. It is a notable way to ſtrengthen faith, when we conſider how ſatisfactorily God at any time hath made good his word, and when we ſtudy much ſuch grounds and props held out to our faith by God, till we come to a full aſſurance; for ſaith the Prophet, *I ſaw the tents, &c.* that is not onely the Church (in whoſe name he ſpeaks) did at that time ſee God clearly performing his Word, and therefore ſhould not doubt in a new ſtrait; but by this practice he teacheth every beleever to look back on what God hath done, and ſtudy upon it, till the ſight of it afford ground of comfort in new troubles, and till they ſee ground to expect the like if need be.

Ver.

Ver. 8. *Was the* LORD *diſpleaſed againſt the rivers? was thine anger againſt the river? was thy wrath againſt the Sea, that thou didſt ride upon thine horſes, and thy charets of ſalvation?*

*Thy bowe was made quite naked according to the oathes of the Tribes, even thy word, Selah. Thou didſt cleave the earth with rivers.*

A fifth inſtance of this glory ſhined forth in two very contrary effects, of dividing the red ſea and *Jordan* to give way to his people, *Exod.* 14. *Joſh.* 3. and of making hard rocks to furniſh water to quench their thirſt, *Exod* 17. 6. *Num.* 20. 8, 11. The firſt of theſe is amplified from Gods great love and fidelity appearing in it, in that when he had no quarrel againſt the ſea and rivers, yet he would trouble them, and march through them in ſtate, on his horſes and chariots of the pillar of cloud and fire (oppoſed to *Pharaohs* chariots and horſemen) for the ſafety and protection of his people, and did draw forth his weapons againſt his enemies, to prove his fidelity, and the truth of his Word, frequently repeated and confirmed by oath to the tribes of *Iſrael*. The ſecond is amplified from Gods liberality, in giving them water in abundance, ſo that it clave the ground, and cut it ſelf a channel, and followed them in rivers, *Numb.* 20. 11. *Pſal.* 78. 15, 16. 1 *Cor.* 10. 4. *Doct.* 1. Variety of contrary trials and difficulties on the right hand and the left, cannot exhauſt that fulneſſe of ſufficiency and love that is in God toward his people; for, if *ſeas and rivers* trouble them, then he can turn them into dry land, and make a way therein for them to paſſe through: If againe, want of water trouble them, he can mak rocks furniſh and afford it. 2. It is a point of ſpiritual wiſdom to read and obſerve Gods minde and ſcope in his works, and what his thoughts are toward the creatures he works upon or about, that ſo none may miſtake or ſtumble, and that his people may more diſtinctly read his love to them; therefore is a queſtion (which includes a denial) thrice propounded, that none might be ſo fooliſh as to think that his dealing ſpake any anger againſt theſe creatures, but rather proclaimed his love to his people. 3. Gods great anger againſt wicked men, ſinfully troubling his people, may appear from conſidering his dealing

ing with insensible creatures (who are not properly objects of Gods anger, as having never sinned; but onely accidentally; when God troubles them for the good of his people, or plagues sinners by smiting them) when in their ordinary course they stand in the way of his peoples well-being; for thus would the Prophet have the Church to gather, that not onely if he divided seas and rivers, he may do the like again, if need be; but if the Lord did so make the sea and rivers to reele, against whom he had no quarrel, what wil he do to them against whom he is justly angry? 4. God can easily appear in great Majesty, when his Church is at a low ebbe; and when he appeareth, any thing will bring safety; and in his Churches greatest strait he will get arms to reach his enemies a sad blow; The troubles of the Church may be full of proofs of love, and even in her lowest condition the Lord can plague his enemies; for, at the red sea, the clouds were his *horses and chariots of salvation*, and there *his bowe was made quite naked*, or his power manifested (as in those countreys they drew their bowes out of cases (wherein they were kept) when they went to battel) to the *Egyptians* overthrow. 5. The people of God do never look rightly on his works, but when thereby their hearts are warmed toward him; and studying of his working is one meanes appointed for stirring up of affection; Therefore both here and afterward, the Prophet who formerly spake of God, is driven to speak to God of his own working: *Thou didst ride, thy bow was made naked, &c.* 6. The Lord stands bound to his people and to every one of them, conjunctly and severally, by his word confirmed by oath, to doe for them what they need, and is for their good; for here is the *oath of the tribes* (made to them by God) *even thy Word.* 7. It is a notable confirmation to faith, that in hardest times, and greatest extremities, God will not erre in his Word, but will make it good by performance; for in this doth the Prophet incourage himself, that even at the red sea, where *Pharaoh* thought he had *Israel* enclosed, even there the Lords *bow was made quite naked according to the oathes of the tribes, &c.* 8. It is the duty of the godly, seriously to remarke every accomplishment of Gods Word, that it may be matter of praise, and clearer ground of future confidence, and relying upon his word; Therefore is *Selah* again subjoyned to this passage. 9. Gods people will not want refreshment in a wilderness, and that in abundance, and God will supply their wants, though every thing

should

ſhould promiſe the contrary; for, God did cleave *the earth with rivers*, when there were nothing but flints in a drie Wilderneſſe to bring it out of.

Ver. 10. *The mountains ſaw thee*, and *they trembled: the overflowing of the water paſſed by: the deep uttered his voice*, and *lift up his hands on high.*

The Prophet reſumes that inſtance of Gods appearing on mount *Sinai*, and the hills about, and that of his dividing the ſea and *Jordan*; and amplifieth both from the conſideration of the great Majeſty of God appearing in them, which was ſuch as made the hills to tremble by an earth-quake, *Exod.* 19. 18. *Pſal.* 114. 4. 6, 1. and the water which uſeth to overflow all, ran out of his way. The depths by making a noiſe teſtified how much they were troubled at his preſence, and by ſtanding up on heaps on every ſide, *Pſal.* 78. 13. *Joſh.* 3. 16. they as it were lift up their hands to adore and teſtifie their ſubjection to their Creator. *Doct.* 1. The Majeſty of God appearing for his people, and the truth and certainty of what he hath promiſed to them, is confirmed by many proofs and witneſſes, which we ſhould take notice of for confirmation of our faith, and for this end ought again and again to ſtudy Gods working, every new ſight whereof wil afford a new leſſon and matter of encouragement; for, theſe confirmations grow upon the Prophets hand, and in this review of Gods work, he finds yet ſomewhat more in them to help his faith, and his work on mountains and waters concurring to prove the ſame point. 2. It is our duty to ſtudy, and be affected with Gods work, not onely as it brings about our good, but chiefly as it ſets forth, and illuſtrates his Majeſty and glory; Therefore the Prophet in this review, obſerveth it as a chief conſideration, that *the mountains ſaw thee, and they trembled, the overflowing of the water paſſed by, &c.* 3. As the brutiſhneſs of men, who do not ſtand in aw of God, may be read from mountains, and ſeas, their trembling and doing homage to him, when he puts them to it: ſo alſo the vanity of all oppoſition to Gods ſaving of his people, may be ſeen in what God did to any of theſe creatures, when they ſtood in his way; for, this is held out in *the mountains ſeeing him, and trembling*, in *that the overflowing of the water paſſed by, the deep uttered his voice, &c.*

Ver.

Ver. 11. *The Sun* and *Moon ſtood ſtil in* their *habitations, at the light of thine arrows they went,* and *at the ſhining of thy glittring ſpear.*

The Prophet alſo reſumes that which had been ſpoken, to *v.* 6 of Gods ſubduing *Iſraels* enemies, and giving to them a peaceable poſſeſſion of the land. And he illuſtrates yet farther the glory of God ſhining in it, from ſeveral inſtances. The firſt whereof is taken from Gods making the Sunne, and Moon to ſerve his people in their warres, and contrary to their courſe to ſtand ſtill in heaven, and ſo to order their motions, as they might give time and light to the Church, to employ their weapons, and might attend and bare witneſſe to Gods fighting for his Church with haile ſtones as with arrows and ſpears, *Joſh.* 10. 11, 12, 13. which are called *bright* and *glittering*, becauſe of Gods immediate hand in them, putting a ſplendor upon them, and becauſe that the Sunne ſhining upon the haile ſtones, as they fell made them to glitter. *Doct.* 1, Albeit the people of God ſeem to be low and baſe things, in reſpect of many glorious creatures which God hath made, and ſet in ſituation above them; and albeit ordinarily they get but the common uſe of creatures, with the reſt of the world, *Matth.* 5. 45. yet theſe ſingular diſpenſations do prove that all the creatures are in a ſpecial way ſervants to Saints, and that the Sunne is as a candle, to be lighted, or put out, when God ſeeth fit, as their affaires require, without any reſpect to the world beſide; for the Sun and Moon *ſtood ſtill*, and went as God and his people had to do. This may teach the godly to read more eſpecial love in the ordinary uſe of theſe benefits, then is let out to others. 2. Enemies to the Church may expect, that the Heaven and Earth, and all the creatures will be againſt them; and when means, or ſecond cauſes on earth cannot overtake them, that Heaven wil reach them; for, *the Sunne and the Moon ſtood ſtill*, to behold and give light to the execution made upon them; and when *Iſrael* could not reach them in their flight, God overtakes them with *arrows and a glittering ſpear.*

Verſ. 12. *Thou didſt march through the land in indignation, thou didſt threſh the Heathen in anger.*

A ſecond inſtance of Gods glory in that work, appeared in his ſpeedy and ſore deſtruction of the *Canaanites*, againſt whom he was highly offended, as being Heathens, and enemies to him, and to his people. His chariots went ſpeedily through them, and trod them down, as corn is threſhed out by the feet of beaſts. *Doct.* 1. Gods anger againſt wicked enemies, (whether Pagans or ſuch whoſe carriage towards his Church is Pagan-like) is a ſore party, and will make great havoek of them; and a ſhort cut of long work; for however the *Canaanites* were many and potent, yet, ſaith he, *Thou didſt march through the land in indignation, thou didſt threſh the people in anger*, 2. God is alone the ſubduer of enemies to his people, (though ſometimes he may employ more inſtruments, ſometimes fewer or none at all) and as he is to be ſeen in what is done, ſo is he to be looked to for what is undone; for, *Thou didſt march through, &c.* ſaith the Prophet, acknowledging what was paſt, and expecting the like to come.

Ver. 13. *Thou wenteſt forth for the ſalvation of thy people,* even *for ſalvation with thine Anointed; thou woundedſt the head out of the houſe of the wicked, by diſcovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.*

14. *Thou didſt ſtrike through with his ſtaves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlewind to ſcatter me: their rejoycing* was *as to devour the poor ſecretly.*

He further inſtanceth the Lords glory in this worke, and in ſeveral others, (as in *Egypt*, under the Judges, *David*, *&c.*) as ſhining. 1. In his deſign in all theſe works, which was to bring ſalvation to his people by his anointed inſtruments, *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *David*, *&c.* as types of Chriſt, and of eternal ſalvation by him. 2. In the remarkable judgements inflicted upon enemies; in that he did deſtroy the heads and rulers of thoſe wicked ſocieties, as was verified on *Pharaoh*, and other Kings (who troubled them after they were ſetled in the land) and overthrew not only the Kings of *Canaan*, but all the Soveraignty, and power that was in that land and oppoſed Iſraels poſſeſſion; yea further, he not onely cut off the the head of ſoveraignty, in the perſons of rulers; but rooted them out in their ſubjects, by over-

overturning ignominiously their stable condition, as a house when it razed from the top to the foundation, or as a mans body (which supports the head) when it is made bare from the heel (which is the foundation he stands on) to the neck, and by cutting off their soveraignty, not only in Cities, but even in inferiour villages, and the rulers thereof; And this he did even by these same means, which they employed against the Church: this was accomplished in the sad stroaks that befel *Egypt*, with *Pharaoh*, especially at the red sea; in the stroaks that many times came upon the subjects of *Israels* oppressors, and the invasions, and conquests made of their territories, under *David* and others, but especially in the entire conquest of the land of *Canaan*, wherin the people were not only subdued, and put under the power of *Israel*, but the very root of the Heathens Soveraignty over that land was rooted up, by the utter extirpation of the inhabitants in cities and villages (except the *Gibeonites*, and such as they sinfully spared) that *Israel* might possesse their habitation. 3. Gods glory shined in these works, in frustrating the proud hopes of enemies; for the Lord did thus destroy them, when they were both violent, and confident of victory, and when they thought to overwhelm the weak Church, as with a tempest and made it their delight by craft and cruelty to devour her. *Doct.* 1. Unto such as are the Lords people, salvation is his scope, and will be the result of all his enterprises; for it is twice marked, that *he went forth for the salvation of his people.* 2. Christ is the ground of all salvation to his people, & every deliverance they get is a pledge of eternal salvation by him; for he *went forth for salvation with his anointed.* These fitted instruments (whom the Church will never want in her need) were but types of Christ, and imployed by him from whom all safety cometh, and these deliverances were shadows of his saving to the uttermost those that come to God through him. And although the possession of *Canaan*, was in a peculiar way typical, yet the godly in all times may look on temporal mercies, as pledges of better. 3. As in wicked Nations or combinations those who are chiefe in authority, are ordinarily most eminent and instrumental in evil: so the Lord will break the combination, by cutting off those which no greatnes nor eminence shal be able to avert; for *Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked.* 4. As wicked States and Nations adding opposition to the Church to all their other wickednesse, do deserve that God should root out such States and Nations, by utter extirpation: so the Lord

hath given proof that he is able, and will not ſpare ſo to doe when he ſeeth it fit, and when his peoples need calls for it; for *he diſcovered the foundation to the neck, and did ſtrike through the head of his villages.* 5. The Lord will doe that in due time to his implacable enemies, which may afford matter of ſerious thoughts to themſelves and others, and ſuch diſpenſations of his are wiſely to be conſidered; therefore *Selah* is againe ſubjoyned to this purpoſe. 6. When the Lord hath enemies great and ſmal to root out, he need no other means but their own weapons, or the very deſignes whereby they think to thrive beſt, and to ruine the Church; for *Thou didſt ſtrike through with his ſtaves, the head of his villages*; This was the iſſue of *Pharaohs* purſuing *Iſrael* at the red ſea, of all the *Canaanites* enterpriſes againſt them, and was more clearly verified on the *Midianites*, *Judg.* 7. 22. on the enemies of *Judah* in *Jehoſhaphats* dayes, 2 *Chron.* 7. 22. 23. and others. 7. As the Church hath ſtill been exerciſed with violent cruel and unſatiable enemies, and muſt ſtill expect to meet with ſuch, ſo the Lord will repay this, and that even when their hopes and earneſtneſſe to carry their deſignes are greateſt; for it was both a cauſe of their deſtruction, and the time of it, when *they came out as a whirlewinde to ſcatter me*, (ſaith the Prophet in the name of the Church,) or violently to overrunne her, and deſtroy her, and when *their rejoycing was to devour the poor ſecretly*, or *in ſecret and hiddden places*: that is, they took pleaſure not only to overthrow them with great Armies coming like a tempeſt upon them, but alſo to ſurprize them with ſudden incurſions when they were exhauſted and had fled to ſecret holes for ſhelter and refuge. This doth well agree with the condition of *Iſrael* under *Midian*, *Judg.* 6 2, 3, &c. under the tyranny of the *Philiſtines*, 1 *Sam.* 13. & 14. and at divers other times, as at the red ſea, *Exod.* 15. 9, 10. and when the *Canaanites* made head againſt them, &c. 8. The Church of God in all ages is as one body and ſociety, having intereſt in the ſame priviledges, communion in the ſame faith, and the latter ages being heirs of the ſufferings of the former, and of the advantages to be reaped by them, therefore ſaith *Habakkuk* in the name of the Church, *They came out to ſcatter me*; as if the Church in his time, in the ſame individual perſons had been under the former trials, becauſe they were heirs to any benefit, or experience that might be gathered from them:

Ver. 15 *Thou didſt walk through the ſea with thine horſes*

*horſes* through *the heap of great waters.*

The Prophet cloſeth all this with a ſecond look of Gods glorious marching, as a man of war, guarding his people through the ſea and deep waters, gathered on heapes. Whence learn, 1. Albeit in a time of eaſe we are ready to ſatisfie our ſelves with a tender view of Gods workes, yet a time of trouble will put us to ſtudy them over and over againe, to ſee what we can finde in them for our relief, and though many times we finde little in his works, yet when we ſtudy well, we will find that we dwell never enough on them, and that the ofmer we ſtudy them, we will finde the more in them; particularly extraordinary mercies would be much and often remembred: ſo much doth the Prophets practice in looking over again on this act, which was an extraordinary work, teach us. 2. It is worthy our ſecond and ſerious thoughts, both for ſetting out of Gods honour, and for confirming our faith, to conſider that Gods people are ſo dear to him, as he will turn the world upſide down, and change the courſe of nature, if need be, before they periſh; and that he can make his people go ſafely, and like conquerors, through great afflictions & dangers, for ſo much doth the repeating of this act of Gods power, in making ſeas a way, and riding with his people through it, as if they had been guarded with an army, teach us.

Verſ. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice: rottenneſs entred into my bones, and I trembled in my ſelfe, that I might reſt in the day of trouble; when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troups.*

The Prophet after this meditation concerning Gods way of old, returneth to his former exerciſe, *v.* 2. about the enſuing captivity, but with great advantage; ſo as in ſtead of praying, he from the former grounds confirmeth his own and the godlies faith againſt all the imaginable difficulties in it; and firſt, againſt the affliction, and humbling exerciſe, which the denunciation of this trouble put him and the godly unto; and although it was a very heavy exerciſe, inſomuch that his belly, or inward bowels (which the Scripture ſometimes puts for the heart, becauſe of its ſecrecy, *Prov.* 20. 27. and for the ſeat of affections,

*Isa.*16. 11.) did beat, and shake for fear, which made his mouth and lips to shiver, so that he could not speak; though his body even to his bones, was consumed with thoughts about it, yea, though he trembled in himself, as in a total distemper, so that nothing he could do, was able to bear it down, or in *his place*, so that through trembling he could neither sit, nor stand, nor rest in any place; yet he reckons by faith, that God by this exercise, would make that sore day of trouble more easie, when it came, and when God should send the *Chaldeans* against that rebellious people, to cut them off. *Doct.* 1. Much use of faith makes easie and comfortable work in prayer; for so the Prophet after this study and meditation, carveth his own answer, and glorieth. 2. As the Lord in his long suffering, uses to give faire warning to his Church before he strike, if we would observe it from his Word; and as he useth to strike sore when his Church abuseth his patience, and puts him to it: so his Word of threatning ought to be believed, and our faith of it ought to appear, in our deep sense; and trembling because of his rod shakenat us; for here is a voice of invading, or cutting in pieces *with troups*, sounding against the Church, before it was inflicted; and this the Prophet *heard*, and believing it, it makes *his belly tremble*, &c. 3. It is Gods way with his people, to humble them by trouble, and to lay them and their strength of every kinde by, before they get a right way of bearing it; and it is their great valour to renounce their own ability, that they may leane on him; for the Prophet speaks of himself, as one spent with the apprehension of the burden, *my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenneſſe entered into my bones, and I trembled in my ſelfe.* 4. The Lord never puts his people to any sore exercise, or trial that is singular, but he hath a purpose of good in it; and will discover that they are not behinde with others who sit idle, when they are kept busie; for in all this exercise of the Prophet, when others of the Jewes were sleeping, the Lord aimed at rest *in a day of trouble*; when othes should be terrified with the invasion. 5. As the Lord sometimes begins at his own house with trouble, whereby they are exempted from the dregs of the cup which the wicked drink out, *Psal.* 75. 8. 1 *Pet.* 4. 17. *Psal.* 91. 12. 13. so the Lords exercising and humbling of his people with the apprehension of approaching trouble, is a presage & a means of making it easie when it cometh; for hereby they are prepared, and not surprised with sinners and hypocrites, *Isa.* 33. 14. they are made to see Gods justice in his stroak, that they dare

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not but ſubmit without quarrelling; they are made to deny themſelves and ſeek ſtrength in God; yea, apprehenſion may conceive trouble, as more terrible then it will prove, and ſo that diſappointment will bring eaſe: therefore ſaith the Prophet, *I trembled in my ſelfe, that I might reſt in the day of trouble.*

Verſ. 17. *Although the fig-tre ſhall not bloſſome, neither* ſhall *fruit* be *in the vines: the labour of the Olive ſhall faile, and the fields ſhall yeild no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there* ſhall be *no herd in the ſtalls;*

18. *Yet I will rejoyce in the* LORD, *I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.*

The Prophet by faith aſcends yet higher, to grapple with the trouble it ſelfe; and though all creature-comforts, and means of ſubſiſtence under trouble ſhould faile, (as if means of livelihood from trees, land, or cattel were cut off from man, as uſeth to be in a general deſolation by war) yet he undertaketh to bear out, and to rejoyce in God for the hope of ſalvation and deliverance, by vertue of the covenant, and that intereſt the Church hath in him. *Doct.* 1. As the calamities of war and captivity are very great and ſore; ſo it is the Lords way in the Churches trouble, to blaſt and lay aſide all matter of confidence in any thing beneath God; for this is no idle or impoſſible ſuppoſition, but what the Church may expect in her afflictions, that *the figtree ſhall not bloſſom*, &c. 2. Faith never gets right footing of exerciſe, ſo long as the believer would ſet bounds and limits to trouble, that it may come hitherto and no farther, and doth not ſee through and condeſcend & ſubmit to the worſt that poſſibly may come; for thus the Prophet ſuppoſeth, that the very courſe of nature for mans preſervation may faile, to the end he may caſt himſelf wholly and cleanly upon God. 3. As the promiſed mercies of the Church, are ſurer then the very courſe of nature, ſo faith apprehending theſe promiſes, will out-live the worſt of ſtormes without fainting; for *Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſome, yet will I rejoyce in the Lord*, ſaith the Pro-

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phet in the name of the Church. 4. Faith in hard times gets ſure footing, when it conſidereth that God who is omnipotent and all-ſufficient, liveth whatever come or go; and that it is ſo uſual for God to give deliverance, according to the Covenant, when all means faile; and for Saints to get it in ſuch away, and at ſuch a time, and not before, as God hath this as a title, whereby he is known in his Church: for ſo doth the Prophets faith fix on *Jehovah, the God of our ſalvation.* 5. Faith is given in hard times, not onely for bearing up, but to furniſh matter of joy and gloriation, which ſhould be endeavoured after, as honouring God, as evidencing that we got more in him then trouble can take from us, as being a means to make trouble eaſie; by avoiding the extremity of diſcouragement to which it drives us and a teſtimony that we expect good by trouble, and ſomewhat that is without the reach of it; therefore the Prophet reſolveth to *rejoyce* and *joy* in the midſt of his calamity.

Ver. 19. *The LORD God* is *my ſtrength, and he will make my feet like Hindes* feet, *and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief ſinger on my ſtringed inſtruments.*

The Prophet by faith ſpeaks out poſitively, what he expects from God as the matter of his joy, in reference both to ſubſiſtence, during the time of the captivity, and to iſſue from it, to wit, that God would be the Churches ſtrength when all means failed, that he would gather and bring them back after ſcattering, and make them nimble to overcome all difficulties in their way, (as a Hind skips over mountains and inacceſſible places,) till they come to poſſeſſe their own country again, which was for the moſt part hilly, and to enjoy communion with God in the Temple, which was ſituate upon the holy mountains, *Pſ.* 87. 1. and the Prophet to avow this his confidence, and edifie the Church, giveth out this exerciſe to be publickly ſung by the Muſicians of the Temple, and plaid upon fit inſtruments preſcribed by him, and therefore called his. *Doct.* 1. It is a ſingular proofe of love, and ought to be the matter of joy to the afflicted Church, when ſhe is ſupported and kept from fainting under her trouble, although ſhe have no more; for, here the Prophet joyeth in that he hath *ſtrength.* See 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9, 10.

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2. When all props and grounds of encouragement on Earth do faile, there is abundance of furniture to support Gods people and make them subsist, do or suffer, as he calls them, which will be forth-comming for the self-denyed who wait on God; for of doth the self-denied Prophet reckon: *Jehovah the Lord is my strength*, See *Isai.* 40. 29, 30, 31. 3. The Lords people are not utterly undone and past hope, even when they are brought into captivity out of their own land, and under the power of others; for, the Lord can return their captivity, as here the Prophet expects. 4. The promises of the Lord are so certainly to be accomplished, as every promise of a mercy is also an undertaking for the removal of every impediment that may stand in the way of it: *He will make my feet like Hindes feet*, saith the Prophet, & carry me over all impediments, and *make me to walke upon my high places.* 5. Though Gods mercies be oft-times little thought of when they are enjoyed, yet the want of them will discover how rich they were, and make the restitution of them sweet; and to the godly man, enjoynment of God in his ordinances, is far above any lot beside; therefore doth the Prophet call the land and mountain of the Temple, *mine high-places*; to shew, that albeit it was a hilly land, in comparison of pleasant *Babel*, yet it was his choice above all the world beside, that it should be sweet to be restored to it again with liberty. 6. Albeit faith may be oft-times conjoyned with much fear, that the believer may be afterward ashamed, if he utter any thing of his confidence; yet what faith gathers from the Word, may be boldly avowed; so doth the Prophet avow his exercise, and make it publick: *To the chiefe Singer, &c.* 7. Faith having in an hard time apprehended God for strength and a blessed issue ought to stir up to praise in hope, in the midst of the trouble: therefore the Prophet directs this to be sung: *To the chiefe Singer on my stringed Instruments.*

ZEPHANIAH.

# ZEPHANIAH.

## THE ARGUMENT.

THis Prophet exercised his function in the dayes of Josiah, as appeareth from the Inscription of the Prophecy, and after the reformation begun by him, as may be gathered from Chap. 1.4. where the land is threatned for the remnant of Baal; and so he hath been contemporary in part with Jeremiah, and among the last who prophesied before the captivity. His scope in a great part is, to confirme and enlarge that sad sentence, 2 Kings 23. 26. whereby, if it were possible, some might be yet excited to repentance; and (however) the impenitent might be rendred yet more inexcusable; And therefore having to do with an obdured people, who were neither bettered by Jeremiahs doctrine, nor by Josiahs example and endeavours; he begins with a denunciation of Gods sore judgements, which were to come upon them for their sins, Chap. 2. exhorting them to repentance, considering the judgements that were to be inflicted on the Nations round about them, Chap. 2. And having given them up as incorrigible, he makes ample promises concerning his Church under the Gospel, for the comfort of any remnant who feared God, Chap. 3.

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## CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter, (after the Inscription of the Prophecy, *v.* 1. we have a denunciation of the general desolation that was to come upon the land, *v.* 2. 3. because of the gross iniquities that abounded among them, *v.* 4 5, 6. And to presse this sentence yet more home, he sets before them. 1. The propinquity of that bloody day, *v.* 7. wherein he would punish the dissolute Court, *v.* 8. and the instruments

inſtruments of oppreſſion, *v.* 9: and would render up the City to the Chaldeans, *v.* 10. who ſhould make their rich men and Merchants to howle, *v.* 11, and ſpoile Epicures of their wealth, *v.* 12,13. 2. He ſets that ſad approaching day yet before them in its terriblenesſe, making the ſtouteſt to cry, *v.* 14. the wrath of God bringing men in diſtreſſe without any comfort, *v.* 15. affrighting them with the alarms and aſſaults of their enemies, *v.* 16. leaving them void of counſel in their greateſt calamities, *v.* 17. and deſtitute of all reliefe wherein they truſted; to be ſuddenly conſumed. *v.* 18.

Ver. 1. *THe word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah, the ſonne of Cuſhi, the ſonne of Gedaliah, the ſonne of Amariah, the ſonne of Hizkiah, in the dayes of Ioſiah, the ſon of Amon, King of Iudah.*

The Inſcription holds forth. 1. The meſſenger employed in this ſervice, who is deſcribed from divers of his Progenitors, who were either Prophets themſelves, or men of note in their time; for ſo is generally conceived, when the Progenitors of the Prophets are recorded. 2. His commiſſion from God, and the authority of his doctrine, which he deviſed not of his own head nor learned by ordinary meanes, but received it by immediate inſpiration. And, 3. The time when he was employed. *Whence learn*, 1: Though the perſons of men adde nothing to a divine meſſage, but God can employ the meaneſt, and make them honourable by employing them; yet ſometime it pleaſeth him to make choice of men of eminency, to clear that it is the honour of the greateſt to be his Ambaſſadours to his people, & yet further to make them inexcuſable who contemn his meſſage for the meanneſſe of the meſſenger; therefore he employeth this Prophet, *Zephaniah the ſonne of Cuſhi, the ſonne of Gedaliah, &c.* whoſe Parents in many generations had been of eminent note amongſt that people, and conſequently himſelf famous for deſcent and pedigree. 2. People through long obduration in ſin, may come to that height, as no endeavours of pious rulers will bring them to repentance, whereby they might prevent ſad threatnings & judgments; for, this word of ſad denunciations

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js ſent in the dayes of *Joſiah*, a pious King and zealous reformer, but the ſon of *Amon*, who by his corrupt wayes, following his father *Manaſſeh*, had made that people incorrigible. 3. In a time of general and continued defection, the Lords long-ſuffering is ſo great, as to multiply meſſengers and warnings before he ſtrike, that ſo men may be reclaimed, or made inexcuſable; for this end was the Prophet ſent out with many others about the time of the approaching captivity, See 2 *Chro.* 26. 15, 16. 4, As the divine authority of God is alwayes to be ſtudied, and ſeen in meſſages in the mouth of his ſervants; ſo eſpecially when the Word ſpeaks ſad things, it is good to ſee God our party, and how little cauſe we have to fix on meſſengers or their humours as the cauſe of ſuch unpleaſing doctrine, therefore, when the Prophet brings out this meſſage, it is avowed and held out to be *the Word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah.*

Ver. 2. *I will utterly conſume all things from off the land, ſaith the Lord.*

3. *I will conſume man and beaſt: I will conſume the fowles of the Heaven, and the fiſhes of the Sea, and the ſtumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, ſaith the Lord.*

The Lord begins here as with a cloſed proceſſe, that needs no more but to pronounce the ſentence: and therefore, this people having been abundantly warned and convinced by former Prophets, he threatens them with a general deſolation of the land, by the deſtruction and taking away of all things in it, not only of men who had ſinned, but of the creatures which they had abuſed to ſatisfie their luſts, inſomuch as the beaſts ſhould be cut off and deſtroyed; yea, the very fowles ſhould be driven away, and the fiſh exhauſted from their ponds, lakes, or rivers, as it is uſual in countries infeſted with wars. By which judgment the Lord threatens to make ſhort work with the ſinner, & his abuſed riches, or his Idolatry, which no reformation could purge from him. *Doct.* 1. The Lords ſpirit will not alwayes ſtrive with his ſinful people, but will at laſt give out his ſentence, according to their ways; ſo much doth this abrupt falling on threatning, without any previous dealing, import. 2. A publike reformation, never ſo pionſly intended, and zealouſly proſecuted by Rulers, after much defection, will be ſo

far

r from keeping off wrath, when the people are not cordial and thorough in the reformation; as by the contrary, it may ripen a people faster for a stroak; for, though *Josiah* was a pious and approved reformer; yet considering that the people did but dissemble in the matter, and dally with God, as is marked, *Jer.* 3.6,10. and appeared suddenly upon *Josiahs* death, in that in three moneths they went all wrong with the succeeding King, 2 *Kings* 23.31, 32. therefore the Lord gives them up as desperate; and begins, *I will utterly consume all things, &c.* 3. When men will not read the greatnesse and dreadfulnesse of divine displeasure against them, from the greatnesse of their sin, or from the threatnings of the Word, it is righteous with God to write it in legible characters of extreame desolation, as here he threatens to do to this incorrigible people, by *utterly consuming all things from off the land, man and beast, &c.* 4. Sinful man is a great burden to the Creation, in his abusing of the creatures to fight against God with them, and provoking God against them, not for any fault of their own, but that he may punish man, for whose use they were created, by smiting them; for, *Judahs* sins make *all things be utterly consumed from off the land*, and bring stroaks on *beasts, fowles of the heaven, and fishes of the sea*, where by the *sea*, we may understand any gathering of waters, in ponds, rivers, or lakes; for, in Scripture the very Laver in the Temple is called *A Sea*, because it conteined much water, 1 *Kings* 7.23. so also the lake of *Generazeth* and *Tiberius*, *Matth.* 8.24.27. *John* 6. 1. See for this doctrine, *Jer.*4.25, and 12.4. *Hos.*4.3. 5. As wicked mens prosperity proveth the neck break of their souls, by their abusing of it, and hardening themselves in sin thereby; and as Idolatry will certainty end in the eternal ruine of the impenitent Idolater: so these sins are oft-times so rooted in the heart and estimation of sinners, that there is no ceasing to sin that way, till the sinner cease to be; and in this case, the Lord will not spare, seeing there is no remedy; so here, after that reformation had essayed them in vain, either as to removing their Idols from them, or making them to cease from abusing the creatures to sin, (in which case they are *stumbling blocks*, as well as Idols) God threatens to cut off *the stumbling blocks with the wicked*, and so put an end to their sin by destroying themselves. 6. In a time of general calamity on all the creatures, man is bound to look upon himselfe as the chiefe and only Delinquent, and to see the controversie pursuing him; therefore is he twice pointed at here,

here; *I will conſume man and beaſt*; and again, *I will cut off man from off the land, ſaith the Lord.*

Verſ. 4. *I will alſo ſtretch out mine hand upon Iudah, and upon all the Inhabitants of Ieruſalem, and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the Prieſts.*

5. *And them that worſhip the hoſte of heaven upon the houſe tops, and them that worſhip, and that ſwear by the Lord, and that ſwear by Malezham.*

6. *And them that are turned back from the Lord, and thoſe that have not ſought the Lord, nor enquired for him.*

The Lord proceeds to declare more particularly upon whom this deſolation was to come, to wit, upon *Judah*, which was the head of thoſe that were left after the captivity of the ten tribes, & particularly upon the chief City *Jeruſalem*; and he cleareth up the cauſes of this ſentence, by pointing at the particular ſorts of ſinners whom he would cut off. Theſe he inſtanceth in ſeveral kinds, eſpecially againſt the firſt Table of the Law, As, 1. Groſſe Idolaters of all ſorts: as theſe, who notwithſtanding *Ioſiahs* reformation, ſtill held up ſome remnant of *Baals* worſhip (which was an Idol of the *Zidonians*, the worſhip whereof was of old followed by *Iſrael* in the dayes of the Judges, & after that was brought into *Iſrael* by *Jezebel*, 1 *Kings* 16. 31. and from thence it came into *Judah*.) Theſe the Lord threatens to cut off, together with the Miniſters of *Baal*, both Chemarims, (who are mentioned alſo, 2 *Kings* 23. 5, *Hoſ.* 10. 5. in the original; and ſeem to have been ſome inferour order of attenders on the Idol, much reſembling Monks in Popery,) and Prieſts of a ſuperiour order. As alſo he threatens to cut off another ſort of Idolaters, who imagining a Deity in the ſtars and planets, becauſe of their ſplendor or influences, did worſhip them on the tops of their houſes, (which were flat in thoſe countries,) as intending to do them homage in their own view, 1. Such as halted betwixt God & Idols, who made a profeſſion of worſhipping the true God, (a part of whoſe worſhip is ſwearing by his name,) or having ſworn obedience to God in that Covenant

Covenant renewed by *Josiah*, yet did mixe his worship with the service of Idols, & particularly of *Malcham*, or *Molech*, the Idol of the Ammonites, 1 *Kings* 11.7. 3. Apostates who after their vowes and Covenant, and begun reformation, had fallen back from God to Idols. 4. Atheists, who had no respect to God nor his worship, whether they followed Idols or not. *Doct.* 1. No former stroak inflicted upon the Church, and no priviledge will exempt impenitent sinners, but if they goe on in their way, the last stroak will be soreſt; for, though *Judah* was not only left of all the children of *Israel*, and *Jerusalem* had God dwelling in the midst of her, yet the Lord will plague *Judah*, *and all the Inhabitants of Jerusalem*, and that not in an ordinary way, but will *stretch out his hand upon them*, which imports a stroak beyond ordinary, *Exod.* 3.20. and 7.5. *Deut.* 4,34. even that which is mentioned here, v. 2,3. 2. When the Lord plagueth a land, the controversie must be of his discovering, least we miscarry in taking it up; therefore when the Lord threatens to strike, he also cleareth wherefore it is. 3. Albeit common calamities comes indifferently upon all, & albeit the godly who study to keep their garments, ought to be sensible in such a time, and to renew their peace with God; yet it is ground of comfort to them, that the stroak is not principally for their cause, nor the wrath pursuing them; therfore the Lord enumerates the grosse sinners, who are his party, that the godly (whatever their lot were) might see their names out of that roll. 4. Mens hearts are naturally so besotted & addicted to Idolatry, as it is hard to get a thorough reformation of it, where once it hath place: and God is so jealous of his glory, as for the least transgression of this kinde, he may justly destroy a land; for here, after *Josiahs* reformation, there is *the remnant of Baal, Chemarims and Priests, and they who worship the host of heaven*, for which he will consume all things that he may *cut them off*. 5. It is too usual for men, that when they see any excellency in the creatures, or finde any advantage by them, their hearts doat on them, and are drawn from God by them; for, upon these grounds did they *worship the hoste of heaven upon the house tops*, and many do yet doat on some creature or other, though that grosse Idolatry be removed. 6. The Lord cannot endure any halting in his matters, or any mixing of true Religion and his worship, with creature worship or Idolatry, but will make that a ground of controversie against a land, as well as for grosser Idolatry; for, *they that worship, and that swear by the Lord,*

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*and that swear by Malcham*, are here put in the roll to be cut off, with the *remnant of Baal, and them that worship the host of heaven*. 7. Oathes are a part of divine worship, wherein is ascribed unto God the glory of Omniscience, and of power to avenge false swearers, and he is called upon for that effect, & therefore are not lightly to be used, nor to confirme a falshood, nor is this glory to be given to any creature to swear by them; for, *swearing by the Lord*, is subjoyned to *worshipping him*, as a chief part of it. 8. Apostasie from professions and engagements is a land-destroying sin, and a great aggravation of sin, whatsoever it be that the decliner turnes to; for, so these words also may be read, *They swear to the Lord*, to wit, in renewing the Covenant, and yet *swear by Malcham*; and clearly, *v. 6. they that are turned backe from the Lord*, are put in the roll to be cut off. 9. As it is usual in times of reformation, where diversity of wayes of Religion are justling out one another, that there arise a generation of Atheists, who care not for God or any Religion at all; so such are abominable, and in a day of vengeance will be ranked with the grossest corrupters, as here: *Those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him*, bringing upon the reer of them whom God will cut off.

Ver. 7. *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.*

To make the preceeding doctrine take the deeper impression the Prophet to, v. 14. resumeth the threatning, and holds out the judgement as neer at hand, to come on both Court & chief City: and withal cleareth up yet more causes of his sentence, especially in sins against the second Table. In this verse he threatens, that all their opposition to the Prophets doctrine, by defending and excusing their sins, and rejecting of threatnings, should be compesced by the approaching judgement, when the Lord should make another manner of sacrifice then they dreamed of, wherein themselves should be the sacrifice, the Chaldeans as Priests to cut them off and slay them; and as they invited friends in their sacrifices of thanksgiving to a feast, and the Priests got a portion; so the Lord would bring the Chaldeans

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to take the ſpoil, and the beaſts and fowles to feed on their carcaſſes; as *Ezek.*39.17. *Rev.*19.17. *Doctr.* 1. The greatneſſe of Gods wrath againſt ſinne, is not ſoon ſeen, nor eaſily laid to heart by them who are moſt concerned; therefore, the Lord findes it neceſſary to inculcate his ſentence over & over again unto them. 2 Howſoever men going on in ſin, without controll, readily have low thoughts of God, yet in due time he will manifeſt himſelf to be God, upon them; and as ſinners take their time of it, for walking after the imagination of their own hearts: ſo God will take his time for putting things in order: therefore is the day of vengeance called *the day of the Lord*, wherein he will appear to be *the Lord Jehovah.* 3. As ſin, never ſo long forborn, and yet continued in, will at laſt bring judgment neer; ſo eſpecially ſin after reformation, ripens faſt for ſpeedy judgment: for, after *Joſiah* had laboured in vain among them, then *the day of the Lord is at hand.* 4. As it becomes all to tremble and adore the juſtice of God in his ſtroakes; ſo howeever impenitent ſinners be both proud and ſtout-hearted when the Word threatens; yet the majeſty and ſeverity of God in puniſhing, will daſh and confound them, and put them from all their boaſting, and ſtrike them mute; then will this be obeyed; *Hold thy peace at the preſence of the Lord God.* 5. Such as tread under foot, or deſpiſe the blood of the Covenant, and thoſe ordinances which hold it out unto us, and are appointed as meanes of our partaking thereof, it is righteous with God to be prodigal of their blood, and deal with them as they have entertained it; for, in recompence of their ſleighting and prophaning of ſacrifices, which were types to point out, and lead them to the blood of Chriſt; *The Lord hath prepared a ſacrifice, he hath bid his gueſts.*

Ver. 8. *And it ſhall come to paſs in the day of the Lords ſacrifice, that I will puniſh the Princes, and the Kings children, and all ſuch as are clothed with ſtrange apparel.*

He threatens that in this bloody approaching day, he will take order with the prophane Court, with the Grandees royal family and Courtiers, who abounded in prodigality, as was accompliſhed; 2 *Kings* 25, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; *Jer.*39.6. *Doct.* 1. When

1. When the Lord commeth to plead a controverſie with a land for ſin, as great men are found ordinarily chief in the provocation, abuſing their power, and being effectual by their example to draw others to ſin; ſo the Lord will not ſpare ſuch, but reckon with them among the firſt: for, *in that day of the Lords ſacrifice, I will puniſh the Princes and the Kings children*, ſaith the Lord. 2. When men of what rank or quality ſoever, give themſelves over to prodigality, and hunting of faſhions in apparel, as ſtudying to make that their glory, which was given at firſt for a badge of ſin: the Lord may juſtly reckon that among the grounds of his controverſie againſt a land, and puniſh becauſe of it; for, the Lord *will puniſh the Princes, and the Kings children, and all that are clothed with ſtrange apparel.* See *Iſai.* 3. from v. 16. to the end.

Ver. 9. *In the ſame day alſo will I puniſh all thoſe that leap on the threſhold, which fill their maſters houſes with violence and deceit.*

The Lord threatens in that day to puniſh another ſin of the Court, and flowing from it, to wit, their oppreſſing of the poor by their agents and ſervants, who with great inſolency invaded the houſes of other, as if no door ſhould be ſhut againſt them; and came back rejoycing into their maſters houſes, to furniſh them with the goods they had purchaſed by fraud and violence *Doctr.* 1. As luxury, ſuperfluity, and prodigality ordinarily exhauſteth mens eſtates, and driveth them to evil ſhifts, to uphold what they account their greatneſſe; and as great men, and thoſe employed by them, think that their will ſhould be a law, and that they may take what they pleaſe without controll; ſo the Lord will in due time appeare an avenger of all ſuch exorbitancies; for they *who are clothed with ſtrange apparrel*, ver. 8. and their agents boldly *leap on the threſhold* of thoſe whom they oppreſſe; and the Lord threatens, *in the ſame day to puniſh all theſe, &c.* 2. As wicked inferiour officers do prove a Court to be corrupt, *Prov.* 29. 12. ſo the Lord in a day of anger, will not only reckon with the authors of oppreſſion, but with all the inſolent Miniſters and Inſtruments thereof; *In the ſame day will I puniſh all thoſe that leap on the threſhold, which fill their maſters houſes, &c.*

Ver. 10. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day,* ſaith

*saith the Lord, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish-gate; and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills.*

From the Court & great ones, he cometh to threaten the chief City, that it should be taken by the Chaldeans, so that from all parts of the City where the enemies entered, (as the fish gate in the City of *David*, toward the west; & the second gate, at which also the Chaldeans entered, *Jer.*39.3.) there should be a terrible noise of enemies assailing, and killing all they met with, & of the Inhabitants howling; all which should make a great echo to resound from the hilly places of the City. *Doct.* 1. High walls and fenced Cities, are no shelter to hold out divine vengeance pursuing impenitent sinners; but will prove as a pound or prison, wherein they shall be surrounded with judgments; for here the Chaldeans fall upon them in their City, on all quarters; *A noise from the fish-gate, howling from the second, &c.* 2. As the tumults of war are very dreadful, when they meet with a guilty conscience, so neglect of repentance will in due time resolve in dreadful and woful wailings under the heavy hand of God; for, here they are threatned with it as a dreadful judgement, and fruit of their sin, that there should be *a cry, an howling, and great crashing*, by reason of the noise of assailing enemies and pursued sinners.

Ver. 11. *Howle ye Inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the Merchant people are cut down: all they that beare silver are cut off.*

He yet threatens further the inhabitants of a particular part of the City, to wit, those who dwelt in the hollow valleys of the City, betwixt the hills, whereon much of it stood; which places did resemble a *Mortar*, as the word signifieth; here the merchants, and men abounding in money, by reason of trade, dwelt: who are threatned, that they shall be made to howle and be cut off: this place of the City seemeth to be the same with that, *Neh.*3.32. *Doct.* 1. When God pursueth a controversie, it is folly for any in any place to dream of safety; for,

*the Inhabitants of Makteſh*, the ſecureſt, and inmoſt part of the City are threatned with *howling and cutting downe*, as well as thoſe at the gates. 2. As former abundance of proſperity will make judgements more bitter; ſo unlawful courſes, whereby men inhaunce and heap up riches, will draw on the bitter judgment; therefore the Lord not only threatens particularly, that *merchants, and all they that bear ſilver ſhould howle*, as being a ſore ſtroak to ſuch; but the word *merchant*, being in the Original a *Cananite*, imports that this judgement came upon them, becauſe they had dealt rather like *Cananites* then *Jewes* in gathering their riches.

Ver. 12. *And it ſhall come to paſs at that time, that I will ſearch Jeruſalem with candles, and puniſh the men that are ſettled on their lees, that ſay in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.*

Ver. 13. *Therefore their goods ſhall become a booty, and their houſes a deſolation: they ſhall alſo build houſes, but not inhabit them, and they ſhall plant vineyars, but not drink the wine thereof.*

The Lord threatens yet further in this taking of the City, to take order with all Atheiſts and Epicures, who abounding in wealth, lay ſecure and at eaſe, (like wine on its dregs when its not removed) in their heart denying Gods providence, or that he took any care of things beneath, to reward good or puniſh evil; and therefore neither loved nor believed his promiſes that they might walk in his way, nor feared his juſtice, ſo as to abandon ſin. Concerning theſe the Lord threatens, that as a man ſearcheth for what is hid or loſt with a candle: ſo he would narrowly ſearch out their ſins, & themſelves to puniſh them for their ſins, ſo as none ſhould eſcape; and their goods, to give them for a ſpoil, whereby their houſes ſhould become deſolate, and they ſhould be diſappointed for all their expectations from their enjoyments, according to his ſentence pronounced of old in his law, *Deut.* 28.30,39. *Doct.* 1. Eaſe and proſperity ſlayeth the fool, and breeds ſuch diſtempers of ſecurity, and ſerling on the earth, as juſtly provokes God to ſmite: for, *God will puniſh the men that are ſetled on their lees.* 2. Proſperity and want of exerciſe

exercise, by vicissitudes of dispensations, its a great feeder of Atheisme, and an enemy to the observation and making use of divine providence; and this again doth embolden and harden men yet more in their secure and wicked courses; for, *the men that are setled on their lees*, are also the men *that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he doe evil*; which is both the effect of their secure condition, and a ground they lay down forsetling themselves yet more in it. 3. Secure Atheists and contemners of God and his providence may expect that God will refute them in a language which they will understand, and make them know his providence upon their own experience, by effects which they shall not get avoided; for, the Lord will prove his Omniscience, and care of things below by searching *Jerusalem* as with candles, that they may not escape him, and his effectual providence by punishing them, making *their goods become a booty, and their houses a desolation*. 4. When the Lord strips a sinful person or people of any mercies which they enjoyed, they will finde upon narrow search, that their enjoyment thereof hath been a snare to them to draw them to sin, and they shall read this in the stroak; for, *Therefore*, (that is because these things had emboldened them to *settle on their lees*, & deny a providence, therefore,) *their goods shall become a booty, &c.* 5. As the Lord will prove the infallible verity of his threatnings, however contemned, upon such as dare run that hazard; so the holy justice of God is to be adored, in disappointing men of any happinesse or contentment they expected in these things for which they hazzard their souls, and so rendring them twice losers, who will not serve him; for, here an old sentence of the law was to be executed, wherein this just procedure shines; *They shall also build houses, but not inhabit them, &c.*

Ver. 14. *The great day of the* LORD *is neere, it is neere, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the* LORD; *the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.*

The Lord having hitherto denounced his judgments to be neer, and declared the causes of them; now, to the end all these threatnings, and the sins procuring them may have weight, and sinners may yet (if possible) be rouzed up, and put from all

all their ſubterfuges; he holds out this approaching day of vengeance in its terribleneſſe, which he clears from ſeveral inſtances: whereof the firſt is, that the moſt couragious, (much more the feeble) amongſt them ſhould be affrighted by it, and be made to cry and weep bitterly. *Doct.* 1. Though ſecure ſinners contemne all oppoſition from men, and do put the evil day far off, and think nothing of vengeance, when it is looked on at a diſtance, yet God is a terrible party againſt ſuch, and can bring evil on a ſudden, and when it is imminent, it will be ſad and dreadful; for, it is *the day of the Lord*, that they ſhould not eye weak Prophets, or the Chaldeans only: and *it is neer, and haſteth greatly*, the ſound or *voice* of its approaching being in their eares that they may not dream of it as afar off; and being neer, it is terrible, and *the great day of the Lord*. 2. Natural courage and magnanimity, however it may promiſe much; yea, and ſuſtain many infirmities: yet it will not bear our, but faint, when God purſueth a controverſie for ſin; for, *the mighty man ſhall cry there bitterly.*

Ver. 15. *That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and diſtreſs, a day of waſteneſs and deſolation, a day of darkneſs and gloominеſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſſe,*

A ſecond inſtance of terribleneſſe is, that in this day the wrath of an angry God ſhould be made manifeſt, by diſtreſſe and trouble on men, and waſting and deſolation on cities and countreys, and that all thoſe calamities ſhould be without any light of comfort; the clouds of their ſin, and of Gods judgement rendering all things black, and diſmal-like *Doct.* 1. As the Lord may juſtly for ſin teſtifie wrath againſt a viſible Church, and fatherly diſpleaſure againſt his own in it; ſo that will make a judgement terrible, when his anger is ſeen and felt in it; for, that is an inſtance of the terrour of that day, that it ſhall be *a day of wrath.* 2. Though God teſtifie his diſpleaſure againſt ſin many wayes, yet ſuch is the ſtupidity of men, that his anger is little ſeen or laid to heart, till it appear in ſad calamities; therefore is *that day called a day of wrath.* 3. In a time when God is purſuing a land for ſin, none are to expect eaſe, but in ſome meaſure of other to be put to it, and to taſte of calamities

nities; for, that day will be *a day of trouble and distresse, a day of wastenesse and desolation* to persons and places. 4. As judgements inflicted for sin, or sin and wrath for sin meeting together, will make a black representation of affaires, will hold out the judgement in its saddest colours, and discover many clouds betwixt the sinner and Gods countenance; so it is the capestone of a calamity, when spiritual comfort, or some favour from God is denyed, or hid under it; when he smites and hides himself, it speaks wrath indeed; for, this makes the day terrible, that when all this is on, it is withal, *a day of darknesse and gloominesse, a day of clouds and thick darknesse.*

Ver. 16. *A day of the trumpet and alarum against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.*

A third instance; that wrath pursuing them for sin, should make the alarme given, to stir up souldiers against them, terrible and make their enemies successefull against their most fortified places. Whence learn, As the alarmes and calamities of War, cannot but be affrightful and sad to the most godly, *Jer.* 4.19. So it is a great addition to its terrour, when guilt makes men read Gods wrath in it, especially when wrath from the Lord lets it not prove a false alarme, but makes the enemy so successefull, as nothing stands in his way, nor can pursued sinners finde any place of safety or shelter; for, being *a day of wrath*, ver. 15. this adds to the terrour, that it is *a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities and high towers.*

Ver. 17. *And I will bring distresse upon men, that they shall walke like blinde men, because they have sinned against the* LORD, *and their blood, shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.*

A fourth and fifth instance is, that the distresse shall be so great, because of sin, as to leave them destitute of all counsel, not knowing what to do, more then blind men know whether

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to walk; and that they ſhall be cut off with the ſword, & their blood poured out in as great abundance, & with as little regard as the duſt they tread upon, and their carcaſſes left like dung on the ground. *Doct.* 1. As it is a dreadful condition in a day of ſtrait to be void of light to direct men what to do; ſo howſoever ſinful men truſt much to their own policy in a calm day, yet a day of wrath will overturn all their deſigns, & leave them deſtitute of counſel; for, *I will bring diſtreſſe upon men, that they ſhall walke like blinde men.* 2. When judgements are accompanied with darkneſs and perplexity, Gods hand is to be eminently ſeen in that ſtroak, and he is to be juſtified by our reading the bitter fruit of ſinne in it; for, ſaith the Lord, *I will bring diſtreſſe, that they ſhall walke like blinde men*, and that becauſe *they have ſinned againſt the Lord.* 3. It is juſt with God, when he hath purſued ſinners with judgements in this life, to cut them off alſo in their iniquity, and ſend them out of the world, to receive their full reward: yea, and to teſtifie his diſpleaſure on their very dead bodies; for ſo it is threatned, *their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt, and their fleſh as dung.* 4. The grediouſneſſe and terribleneſſe of divine wrath againſt ſin, may be read in the meaſure of a calamity, in the ignominy of a ſtroak, and in Gods not owning, nor evidencing that he pitties in affliction; for all theſe are in this ſtroak to be matter of terrour to them, *their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt, and their fleſh as dung.*

Ver. 18. *Neither their ſilver nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the* LORDS *wrath, but the whole land ſhall be devoured by the fire of his jealouſie: for he ſhall make even a ſpeedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.*

The terribleneſſe of this day doth appear further in this, that all helps ſhall prove vain, and their riches wherein they truſted or whereby they might think to ranſome their lives, ſhould not be able to deliver them from wrath, nor hinder the Lord, in his kindled jealouſie, to make ſhort work in waſting the land, and conſuming the inhabitants. *Doct.* 1. Many are the falſe confidences, whereby men think to ſecure themſelves againſt a day of vengeance, which it is no eaſie work to aſſure, that wrath

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may be seen in its terribleneſſe; for, after all their imaginations that this evil day was far off, that it ſhould be light, that their fenced Cities would ſhelter them, &c. which have been declared uſeleſſe in the former purpoſe, there remaineth yet their riches to be declared vaine. 2. The wrath of God purſuing ſin, is ſo dreadful, as no riches or treaſures wherein men truſt, can ward off the ſtroak, nor any thing elſe, ſave the blood of Chriſt fled unto by the ſelfe-condemned ſinner; for *neither their ſilver nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lords wrath.* See *Prov.* 11. 4. *Ezek.* 7. 19. 3: When Gods love toward his people is provoked unto jealouſie, by their breach of mariage-duty, and embracing ſtrange lovers, it produceth moſt ſharp and violent judgements, and acts as a fire which ſpeedily conſumeth all before it, and with which no paction or treaty can be made; for, *the whole land ſhall be devoured by the fire of his jealouſie: for he ſhall make even a ſpeedy riddance of all them that dwell in the Land.*

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## CHAP. II.

THE Lord having thus threatned his ſinful people; comes now to exhort them to make right uſe thereof, by inviting the body of the land to repent, before the ſentence were executed, *verſ.* 1, 2. and the godly remnant, to ſeek God, and follow their duty, in hope of favour, when the evil day ſhould come, *v.* 3. and that theſe exhortations may be more effectual, he ſets before them the ſad judgements that were to come upon the Nations round about; ſuch as the *Philiſtins*, verſ. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, verſ. 8. 9. 10. 11. the *Ethiopians*, verſ. 12. and the *Aſſyrians* with their chiefe City, *verſ.* 13, 14, 15.

Verſ. 1. GAther your ſelves together, yea gather together, O Nation not deſired,

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2. *Before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the* LORD *come upon you, before the day of the* LORDS *anger come upon you.*

The ſum of the firſt exhortation, directed to the impenitent body of the Nation, is, that however they were not a people deſirous of their own good, nor worthy of any favour, yet the Lord would make offer of it; and therefore invites them to make a ſerious enquiry, and ſanning of themſelves, and one of another; and that for this end they would gather and recollect themſelves, and meet together in ſolemne Aſſemblies for humiliation and repentance, and that they would do this timouſly; before he decreed vengeance (which in Gods long-ſuffering had been yet ſuſpended) break forth, and before a day of patience paſs over ſwiftly, as the chaff before the wind; or before the day come wherein they ſhould be as chaffe before the wind, and the decreed vengeance ſhould break forth in execution ſuddenly and eaſily; and wherein the great fierce anger from the Lord, ſhould inflict judgement without mercy: *Doct.* 1. When the Lord ſpeaks in hardeſt tearmes to his ſinfúl people, yet they are to read in it an invitation and allowance to come to him by repentance, and not that he is putting them away from any duty of that kinde; Therefore, though the Lord had uttered his ſentence as a concluded buſineſs, *chap.* 1. *v.* 2. yet here he ſheweth what uſe they ſhould make of it, in turning to him by repentance. 2. Repentance is not acceptably endeavoured, where there is not a thorough and narrow ſearch & enquiry made into our own hearts and wayes, and an helping one of another, in our ſtations to perform that duty; that ſo our conſciences from clear conviction, may charge upon us thoſe ſins for which the Word threatens, and the ſinfulneſſe of them, and may ſtir up to turn unto the Lord; for ſo the words in the Original may be rendered, *ſearch narrowly into your ſelves, and ſearch,* (as men do after ſtubble ſcattered here and there, as the word is uſed, *Exod.* 5. 12. or after what is loſt amongſt it) that is, ſearch, and ſearch again, & while ye are thus employed about your ſelvs, ſtir up and help others to ſearch; for ſo the original conſtruction doth import. 3. For ſtirring up to this duty of ſearching, and making it effectual, it is neceſſary that every man recollect his wandring thoughts, whereby he hath ſnuffed up the winde

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at his pleasure, and hunted after vanities; and that the communion of Saints be entertained, particularly in solemne and publick humiliations; for, so doth the Word signifie, according to the translation, *gather your selves together, yea, gather together.* See *Joel* 2. 15, 16. 4. As this duty of repentance and self-searching is of great importance and concernment in all times, and cases, and especially when God declares himself to be angry; so it is a duty to the performance whereof there is need of much stirring up from the Lord; so much also doth the doubling of exhortations, *gather, yea gather*, import. 5. It is necessary for our humiliation, and for setting forth the freedome of Gods love, and how much he tendereth our welfare; that we know our selves well, and what we are, to whom the Lord gives invitations, or makes gracious offers: for this end is it declared here, that the Lord invites to repentance a nation *not affected with desire*, to wit, of turning to God, or of their own good; and *not desired*, or worthy to be beloved of him: the Original word will import both. 6. It is a great addition unto, and aggravation of sin, when it is general and overspreads a land, either by general corruption, or by rulers their connivence at sins of particular persons, which brings guilt upon the whole land; or by private persons, their not mourning for the abominations of the time, which involveth them in the guilt thereof: All which also may contribute to commend Gods kindness in following such a crew, and to hold forth the necessity of repentance, when the disease is so desperate; for this cause it is marked, that they were, *a Nation not desired*, especially by reason of overflowing sin. 7. As the Lord in his long-suffering, doth not always execute vengeance immediately upon his purposing, or threatning so to do, but alloweth some time for bringing forth of that conceived birth (as the word in the original imports) so the Lords most absolute threatnings do not seclude the penitent from hope, but rather invite to speedy repentance; so are we taught here, *gather your selves before the decree bring forth*; as giving time to them to repent, and ground of hope if they should so do; for however the Lords eternal purposes be unalterable, yet his threatnings (which are his pronounced decree, or sentence according to the law) when most absolutely pronounced, to exclude the exception of repentance, *Jon.* 3. 4, 10. The Lord threatning so sharply, that upon our perverting of him, he may not execute it; as, on the contrary, he promiseth that he may fulfill. And when his threatnings do hold forth, even

even his irrevocable purpose to send outward land-judgements, notwithstanding the repentance of any, as 2 *Kings* 23.26.27. yet repentance before it be executed, is to good purpose, for removing the penitent before the evil day come, as was done to *Josiah*; for moderating it to him, if he be continued as *Jeremiah*, and the godly remnant found, *Jer.* 15.11. & for taking off wrath out of whatsoever they shal taste of the cup. 8. It is an horrid iniquity to despise the patience and long-suffering of God, or to neglect the setting up of our furnace of examination, & self-searching when he threatens, and will provoke him to set up his furnace of judgment so much the hotter, that it hath been long forborn; for, if they let *the decree bring forth*, and a day of patience blow over without repentance and fanning themselves, he will make *the day pass*, and drive them *as chaff*, and will send *his fierce anger upon them*. 9. None who do believe divine wrath, how forcible it is, and how weak themselves are to resist, but they do proclame their own madness, if they set not about repentance when God threatens; Therefore it is thrice held out, what this day will be, that *it shall pass as chaff*, that *the fierce angers of the Lord, the day of the Lords anger shall come upon them*, as sufficient to move any who were not quite bereft of sense, to *gather together before the decree bring forth*.

Ver. 3. *Seek ye the LORD all ye meeke of the earth, which have wrought his judgement, seeke righteousnesse, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORDS anger.*

There being little hope of the body of the land, that they would by repentance avert a day of anger; Therfore the Lord turns to the godly remnant in the land, who are humbled and made meek under the sense of sin, and Gods hand, and who have studied to make conscience of their duty enjoyned in the word; These he exhorts to go on in seeking the Lords face and favour, and to grow in humility, in meekness and in righteous walking, and in making use of the righteousness of Christ, as being the certain way to be hid from wrath to come, & the only way giving any ground of hope to get safety in outward judgements, though he will not make them absolutely sure of it: for this sort of speech, see on *Jon.* 3. 9. *Doct.* 1. In declining times the Lord hath

hath a peculiar eye to the godly, and expects much from them; Therefore, leaving the wicked Nation, he turneth to them with exhortations and promises. 2. The truth and reality of grace will manifest it selfe in mens being of subdued, meek and humble spirits, stooping to the Word, abasing themselves, trembling under judgements, and tender towards others, and in their not giving way to discouragement from duty, however they be humble, but stirring up themselves to seek God for himself, and adorning their profession with righteous conversation, respecting Gods commands, whatever their own natural inclinations be; Thus are the Godly described here to be *seekers of the Lord, the meek of the earth* (or *of the land*) *which have wrought his judgment*, or obeyed his righteous ordinances enjoyned to them. 3. Though it be incident to the godly to fall into some decay in a time of general defection, and to be discouraged from their duty by the evil example of others; yet the truly godly ought to prove themselves to be such by their perseverance, and needing and seeking more of what they already have, and of Christs righteousnesse to cover all; and especially they ought to be on the growing hand, if they would beare out and finde favour in an evil time; therefore in such a time is this exhortation given, *seek ye the Lord, seek righteousnesse, seek meekenesse*, the repeating of the exhortation shewing the necessity of the thing exhorted to. 4. As it is the Lords great mercy toward such as fear him, that he puts the remission of their sins and their eternal happinesse out of all doubt; so also he is able, when he pleaseth, in hardest dayes to give them proofes of love in temporal favours by taking them into his protection, and either delivering them from trouble, or moderating it; for, here there is no doubt made of the first, and even in the second it is declared possible, *it may be ye shall be hid*. 5. The Lord seeth it fit to exercise his dearest children with great uncertainties what their lot may be in common calamities, not that they should doubt of his power, or good will, but that they may be sensible of the difficulty of the thing it self, and that in so great & overflowing calamities, the righteous shall scarcely be saved, that so it may appear to be a singular favour when God doth it; that the godly having done their duty, may yet humble themselvs before the Lord, as not meriting any such thing as hiding; That they may be excited yet to more diligence, that they may learn to expect the free reward of piety, in temporal things, with much submission; and that, amidst all improbabilities, and

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incertainties, the ſeeker of God may learne by faith to venture much on God, and abſolutely rely on his goodneſs and tenderneſſe, who will not withhold any good thing from his own, *Pſ.* 34. 10. and 84, 11. For theſe cauſes it is, that this exhortation is ſeconded with ſo uncertain-like an encouragement, *it may be ye ſhall be hid, &c.* 6. Whatever uncertainty ſeekers of God may be put to, as to receiving of temporal favours; yet they ought to be fixed in this, That ſeeking of God is the ſhorteſt cut, and onely way to ſpeed, even in theſe things; for, though they get but *a may be*, yet upon that they are exhorted to ſeek the Lord, as the only way to be ſure, and their getting but *a may be*, puts it out of all doubt, that they who turn aſide to crooked ways, may expect nothing of that kind. See 1 *Pet.* 4. 18.

Verſ. 4. *For Gaza ſhall be forſaken, and Aſhkelon a deſolation; they ſhall drive out Aſhdod at the noon day, and Ekron ſhall be rooted up.*

5. *Wo unto the inhabitants of the ſea coaſt: the Nation of the Cherethites the word of the Lord is againſt you, O Canaan the Land of the Philiſtines, I will even deſtroy thee, that there ſhall be no inhabitant.*

6. *And the ſea coaſt ſhall be dwellings, and cottages for ſhepherds, and folds for flocks.*

To make the preceding exhortation have the more effect, the Lord ſubjoynes a denunciation of ſad judgements to come upon the enemies of the Jews on all hands of them, intermixing ſome promiſes, that theſe ſtroaks ſhould tend to the advantage of truth and the Church. The firſt he begins at, are the Philiſtines on their weſt ſide; wherein he firſt threatens four of their great Cities, with being made ſolitary and deſolate, with being openly and violently ſtormed, and the inhabitants led into captivity, when it ſhould be impoſſible to travel for heat, and with total extirpation; which judgements are expreſſed in the firſt language, with fit alluſions to the names of the Cities, v. 4, and *Gath* the fifth principal City of the Philiſtines, is omitted in this ſentence, either becauſe it was then in poſſeſſion of the Jews, or becauſe it is comprehended under the reſt, as *Amos* 1. 8.

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2. He threatens the inhabitants of the country about, lying upon the sea coasts; who were either Cherethites (of whom see 1 *Sam.* 30. 14. *Ezek.* 25, 16. or Philistines properly so called, who descended of cursed *Cham*. *Gen.* 10. 6, 13, 14. These he threatens with his wo, & a purpose against them to lay them desolate, so that their fertile and populous Country should be turned into a place of pasture, and for flocks and herds to dwel in, v. 5, 6. The ground of this sentence is insinuated, in that they are called *Canaan*, that is, not only of his posterity, but possessors of a part of the land of *Canaan*, which belonged to *Israel*, *Josh.* 13. 2, 3. And these judgements were inflicted on the Philistines, partly by *Pharaoh*, *Jer.* 47. 1. Partly by the Babylonians, *Jer.* 47. 2, 3, 4, 5. and partly by the Jewes themselves, after their return; and afterward by *Alexander* the Great, as histories do record. *Doct.* 1. It is a profitable meanes for stirring up the visible Church to repentance, and the godly to perseverance, in an evil time, to consider the hand of God upon nations about, and enemies to the Church, therefore are these threatnings brought in upon the back of the former exhortations; and subjoyned to them with the particle *for*, as pointing out his scope in the subsequent purpose to be for their stirring up; and we may conceive the dependance thus. 1. Judgments threatned or executed upon others, ought to stir up the wicked in the Church to repent; *Gather your selves, ... for Gaza shall be forsaken.* 2. The godly may perceive Gods tender care of them in calamities, whereof they taste when they look upon the full measure which he meets out to others: seekers of God will see themselves *hid* in all their troubles, when they look on Gaza *forsaken*, Ashkelon *a desolation*. 3. It is an encouragement to persevere in godlinesse, notwithstanding any trouble, to consider that God will recompence men for all the wrongs done to the godly, and will yet restore them and make all tend to their good. *Seek the Lord*, saith he, *for* Gaza *shall be forsaken, &c.* And so *Moab*, *Ammon*, and the rest of them, when *Judahs* remnant shall be made up, as it is *v.* 7. *Doct.* 2. Such as have been long injurers of the people of God, and invetcrate enemies to them, God can when he will meet with them; for these Philistines had long possessed a part of *Canaan*, and as sacred Histories tell us, were vexers of the Church on all occasions, and now the Lord threatens to pay them home. 3. The Lord can engage with his enemies in their full strength, and by his stroak undo them, and put them to all disadvantages; for when he engages with the Philistines in their

their flouriſhing condition of Cities and Countrey, he maketh them *to be forſaken, and a deſolation drives them out, and rooteth them up, and deſtroyeth them, that there ſhall be no Inhabitant*; 4. When God is angry, no place can promiſe an exemption to themſelves from judnements, ſtrong Cities, open Countries, and lurking holes in it, are all alike potent to his blow; for here he threatens their Cities; *the Nation and the Land*, or Countrey. 5. As there may be much wo intended, and purpoſed againſt them, who little apprehend it; till they be made to feel it in effects; ſo the Lords Word writing ſad things againſt a people, is the beginning of their wo, however for a time they may proſper notwithſtanding; for, *Wo* ſaith he to the *Philiſtines* now flouriſhing, *the Word of the Lord is againſt you*. It portendeth wo, that God hath ſuch a word or ſentence in his own purpoſe againſt them, but they were viſibly under wo when it was publiſhed. 6. Sin as it highly provokes God, and endeavoureth to trample under foot his glory, & waſteth ſouls and conſciences: ſo when God comes to puniſh for it, it will lay the moſt fertile & populous land deſolate and waſte: *I will even deſtroy thee, that there ſhall be no Inhabitant, and the ſea-coaſt ſhall be dwellings, and cottages for ſhepheards, &c.* 7. Places of great confluence and reſort, are ordinarily places of much ſin, which draweth down remarkable judgement; Therefore this countrey is twice threatned under the name of the *ſea-coaſt*, not only with relation to its fertility, but becauſe much repaire of many Nations treaſured up much ſin, as fuel to inſuing wrath.

Ver. 7. *And the coaſt ſhall be for the remnant of the houſe of Judah, they ſhall feed thereupon; in the houſes of Aſhkelon ſhall they lye down in the evening: for the Lord their God ſhall viſit them, and turne away their captivity.*

This judgement is amplified from an event, that ſhould follow upon it, to wit, that the remnant of the *Jewes*, when the Lord, according to his Covenant ſhouln manifeſt his favour in returning their captivity, were to poſſeſſe the land of the *Philiſtines*, as a part of their own inheritance, and as the Lords flock, they were to feed and dwell there ſecurely, even in the evening, when it is perillous for flocks or perſons to be abroad in a waſted countrey. This was accompliſhed partly literally,

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when at the return of the *Jewes* from *Babylon*, they poſſeſſed theſe lands, as ſtories mention, beſide what may farther be done when the Lord ſaveth all *Iſrael*, and partly ſpiritually, when the inhabitants of theſe places were converted to the Church, and added to the Lords *Iſrael* by the Goſpel, as is marked, *Act.* 8. 26. 40. where *Azotus* is the ſame with *Aſhdod*. *Doct.* 1. As Gods covenant with a people may ſtand firme notwithſtanding many afflictions; ſo that ſtanding Covenant will be forthcomming, for much tenderneſſe, and reſtitution in due time, to the afflicted confederates; when others ſhall periſh in their calamities; for the Lord ſpeaks ſtill to captive *Judah* in the Covenant-ſtile, *the Lord their God*; and when the *Philiſtines* are gone, he promiſeth to *Judah*, that *the Lord their God will viſit them, and turne away their captivity*. 2. Covenant-rights and promiſe-rights will not faile to appear in performance, though after long delayes and many diſappointments; for this *ſea coaſt* was *Judah's* by right, which though they were long kept out of, yet at laſt *the coaſt ſhall be for the houſe of Judah*: 3. The Lord hath reſerved choice mercies for his peoples loweſt eſtate, and will do that for them then, which they could not do for themſelves when they were in greateſt power; *for the remnant of the houſe of Judah* ſhall poſſeſſe *the coaſt*, which they could not doe when they were a flouriſhing kingdome; and when they are but a remnant, *yet they feed thereupon, and lie down in the evening*. 4. When the Lord doth afflict his Church, he doth not only reſtore her, but by ſome ſpecial advantage doth recompenſe her loſſe by trouble; This is held out to us, by the remnant of *Judah*, their getting the land of the *Philiſtines* with their own land, to make up their hard captivity. 5. In all the calamities wherewith the Lord afflicts the Nations, he hath a ſingular reſpect to the ſetting forth of his own glory, by bringing advantage to the Church and Goſpel by theſe judgements; ſo the Lord in deſtroying the *Philiſtines* hath an eye to the planting of *Judah* there, and to the ſpreading of the Goſpel in thoſe places.

Verſ. 8. *I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified* themſelves *againſt their border.*

The next than God deales with are the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* whom he conjoyneth in this threatning, as being both deſcended of *Lot*, and ſo alike near of kin to the Jews, and as running both one way againſt the Church, and being often confederate together for that end, *Pſal.* 83. 5, 6, 7, &c. The ground of the Lords challenge againſt them, is, their proud contemning and reproaching of his people in the day of their affliction, and their boaſting to encroach upon the Churches border, and to poſſeſſe their land. *Doct.* 1. No relation will tie men who are wicked, to be friends to the Church and godly, but all of them, though never ſo near, wil run one way to be her enemies; ſo did *Moab and the Children of Ammon*, though both in kin to *Juda*. 2. Bitter reproaches and inſolent mocking of the afflicted Church, is a great addition to her trial, which God will take notice of, as a ſufficient ground of controverſie againſt the reproacher; ſo it is here taken notice of as *Judahs* trial from them, and Gods quarrel againſt them. *I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the Children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people.* 3. The Lords chaſtiſing of his people in anger for their ſins, doth not hinder his affection, to take notice of the wrongs done by wicked inſtruments, in due time to repay them; Nor do reproaches caſt upon the Lords people, diminiſh any whit his eſtimation of them, but rather increaſe the expreſſion of it; *I have heard the reproach*, ſaith the Lord; and notwithſtanding all that, yea, ſo much the more, they are *my people*. 4. Nor ſo much as wicked proud boaſting, and wicked enterpriſing, (far more wicked acting) againſt the Lords people, their land and rights, but it will in due time be reckoned for; for, it is put upon theſe enemies ſcore, that they *magnified themſelves againſt the border*, threatning to poſſeſſe it.

Ver. 9. *Therefore as I live, ſaith the* LORD *of hoſtes, the God of Iſrael, Surely Moab ſhall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah*, even *the breeding of nettles, and ſalt pits, and a perpetual deſolation; the reſidue of my people ſhall ſpoile them, and the remnant of my people ſhall poſſeſs them.*

10. *This ſhall they have for their pride, becauſe they have reproached and magnified* themſelves *againſt the people of the Lord of hoſtes.*

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Follows the judgement threatned for this ſin, and confirmed by an oath, that theſe enemies ſhould be made as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, not for the way of their deſtruction, but for Gods rooting them and their memory out, and laying their land utterly deſolate, (as a ſalted land, which makes it barren) to bear onely weeds; and that for a long time, if not for ever as to them, though there be a promiſe of their reſtitution, eſpecially ſpiritual, *Jer.* 48. 47. & 49. 6. And whereas they encroached upon *Judah*, the Lord threatens to make *Judah* ſpoile and poſſeſſe their land, *v.* 9. which is to be underſtood as that promiſe, *v.* 7. is: and that they may know the cauſe of this ſtroak, the Lord repeats it againe, that all this ſhould come upon them for their proud inſolency againſt, and reproaching of his people, *v.* 10. *Doct.* 1. The Lord is in great earneſt, that he will meet with the Churches enemies, as having both power and reaſon ſo to do (he being the Churches Protector in Covenant with her) though it be little believed, either by the Church or his enemies; therefore he aſſures them of it by his oath, and takes unto himſelf titles of power and intereſt: *As I live ſaith the Lord of Hoſts the God of Iſrael.* 2. Though the Lord think is not fit to ſmite every ſinful Nation with immediate judgements from heaven, or to make their countreys utterly and for ever unuſeful, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were; yet his diſpleaſure is no leſſe againſt the enemies of his people, then againſt thoſe he hath ſo ſmitten: and he will in due time evidence it by ſore deſolation, and of long continuance, being compared with the Churches lot; therefore is the Lords wrath on theſe Nations compared with that which he let forth on *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*: *Surely Moab ſhall be as Sodom, and the Children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and ſalt-pits, and a perpetual deſolation.* 3 Though the Church may oft times be expoſed as a prey to her enemies, yet the day may come when the Church will be employed to do that to enemies, which they threatned to do to them, and in part attempted to do; for, whereas *Moab* and *Ammon magnified themſelves againſt Iſraels border*, *v.* 8. now the Lord threatens, that *the reſidue of my people ſhall ſpoil them, and the remnant of my people ſhall poſſeſſe them.* 4. In a time of judgements upon enemies, there will be need of frequent inculcating of Gods controverſie, if they would have a bleſſed uſe of ſtroaks in turning to God: and that ſo much the rather, as they will be ready to ſee many things before they ſee their injuries done to the Church, as a cauſe of their calamity;

therefore is this quarrel again repeated: *This shall they have for their pride, &c.* 5. Pride and insolency will not misse a fall and stroak in due time, especially when pride leads men to act sin and wrong, not out of infirmity or ignorance, but with an high hand, and that against the Church; for, *This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached, and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord.* 6. A chiefe cause of the Lords appearing for his reproached and wronged people is, that the wrongs done to them seem to reflect on him, as if he were not keeping Covenant with them, or not able to defend or redresse their wrongs; and therefore as he affects them even in troubles, so he will in due time by visible acts set out his power for them, and his love to them; therefore this stroak is threatned, because they were insolent against *the people of the Lord of hosts*; where both his power and his interest in *Israel*, are asserted as rubbed upon by them, and to be cleared in the judgement to come upon them.

Vers. 11. *The LORD* will be *terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship him, every one from his place,* even *all the Isles of the Heathen.*

This stroak is farther illustrated from an effect: that when the Lord shall thus terribly plague enemies, and vindicate the wrongs done to his Church, he will consume the idols of the Nations also, by blasting their reputation that could not help their worshippers, whereas God helps his people, and shal withdraw worship from them as useless things, (and so famish them of their food and oblations, and make them lean) whereby way shall be made for spreading of the knowledge of the true God, especially in the dayes of the Gospel, wherein without distinction of place, *John* 4. 21, or of Nations, *Acts* 10. 34, 35. all the remotest Nations lying beyond the sea to *Judea*, and the Islanders shall serve him; and yet more particularly, in the day of the saving of all *Israel*, which shall be life from the dead to the generality of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 11. 15. the fame of Gods doing for them, inviting all Nations to renounce their idols and serve him. *Doct.* 1. God is a dreadfull Party for weak man

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to provok: and albeit he be oft times little regarded of the ſecure ſinner, yet in a day of anger he will be found terrible; *The Lord will be terrible unto them.* 2. As idolatry is a great cauſe of Gods anger againſt a people provoking him to ſmite them, ſo people are ordinarily ſo addicted to idols, that they are undone before they ceaſe to eſteem of them: ſo much doth the conexion of theſe two import; *The Lord will be terrible unto them, for he will famiſh all the gods of the earth*; he will terribly deſtroy them, becauſe he hath a mind to bring down their Idols. 3. As it is a ſweet fruit of judgements, when they bring down Idols as well as lay other things waſte: ſo howſoever the Lord doth ſuffer idolatry for a time, yet at laſt, by judgments on idolaters, and by mercies toward his people, he will aboliſh idols, and exalt himſelf as the only true God, to be choſen and ſerved by the world; for, *He will famiſh all the gods of the earth, and men ſhall worſhip him.* 4. It is the priviledge of the new Teſtament and a part of the glory of Chriſts Kingdome, that the Lords worſhip is not confined to a Temple at *Jeruſalem*, nor to the Nation of *Iſrael*, and ſuch as became Proſelytes, and joyned to them; but that in every place, even from the remoteſt Iſles, all nations have acceſs to God through the Mediator; for, ſo is here fore-prophecied: *Men ſhall worſhip him, every one from his place, even all the Iſles of the Heathen.* 5. It is of great concernment to all the Churches of Chriſt, to mind much, and by their prayers to help forward and haſten the converſion of *Iſrael*, as tending to the advancement of the Goſpel among the Gentiles; for then this prophecy will get a new and farther accompliſhment, *Rom.* 11. 15.

Verſ. 12. *Ye Ethiopians alſo, ye ſhall be ſlaine by my ſword.*

The third denunciation is againſt the Ethiopians, who were either a Nation commonly called ſo, beyond *Egypt*, who had ſerved in armies employed againſt the Church, as theſe other Southern Nations were uſually employed abroad, *Nahum.* 3. 9. *Ezek.* 27. 10. or rather a people in *Arabia*, deſcended alſo from *Cuſh*, and lying on the other ſide of the red ſea, over againſt *Ethiopia* commonly ſo called, who are the people uſually called *Ethiopians* in Scripture: theſe as they had been deſtroyed by *Aſa*,

2 *Chron.*

2 *Chron.* 14. 9, &c. and given into the hands of *Sennacherib*, as a ranſome for *Judah*, *Iſa.* 43, 3. with 2 *Kings* 19. 9. ſo the Lord here threatens to cut them off by his ſword in the hand of *Nebuchadnezzar*, either in his conqueſt of *Arabia*, or when he ſubdued *Egypt*, and deſtroyed thoſe other *Ethiopians*, amongſt *Egypts* Aſſociates, as they were, *Jer.* 46. 2. with 9. *Doct.* 1. Though the enemies of the Church were never ſo many on all hands, and never ſo far remote, yet Gods hand is enough for them all; for, here he undertakes againſt enemies on all quarters; and beſides the *Philiſtines*, *Moab* and *Ammon*, he threatens that *the Ethiopians alſo* (which ſoever of theſe Nations it be) *ſhall be ſlain.* 2. It is a ſpecial part of right reading of judgements, to ſee Gods hand in them, that his quarrel may be ſtudied, that his love to his people in avenging their quarrel may be ſeen, that his ſoveraign power and providence over al the world may be adored, and the ſmitten may know whither to flee for an iſſue; therefore it is added, *Ye ſhall be ſlain by my ſword.*

Verſ. 13. *And he will ſtretch out his hand againſt the North, and deſtroy Aſſyria, and will make Nineveh a deſolation, and dry like a wilderneſs.*

14. *And flocks ſhall lie down in the midſt of her: all the beaſts of the Nations; both the Cormorant and the Bittern ſhall lodge in the upper lintels of it:* their *voyce ſhall ſing in the windows: deſolation ſhall* be *in their threſholds: for he ſhall uncover the Cedar-work.*

The laſt denunciation is againſt the Aſſyrians in the North, and the chief City of that Empire, which he threatens to make deſolate by his out-ſtretched hand, and like a barren wilderneſs, to be an habitation for all kinde of beaſts, and monſtrous creatures of all ſorts, in ſtead of eminent Princes, and many people who frequented there; and that for this end, where there had been ſo many ſtately habitations, he would cauſe to pull down their roofs, and leave nothing but bare walls, fit for ſuch gueſts to haunt in. *Doct.* 1. God in executing of judgements will not forget to reach greateſt enemies ſaddeſt ſtroaks: therefore the Lord ſets out *Aſſyria* and *Nineveh's* judgements, in ſo dread-

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ful and ample a way, not only to give more ample encouragement to his people, whose faith might readily faint most in this particular: but to testifie the greatness of his displeasure against them, for leading his *Israel* captive: *He will stretch out his hand against the North, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.* 2. Howsoever God may seem to own a prospering enemy against his people, and they may think so because of their successe; yet God will in due time testifie the contrary; for, they boasted of old, that they came not up without the Lord, 2 *Kings* 18, 25. therefore *the Lord will stretch out his hand against the North, &c.* 3. Albeit that sinful wayes and oppression may for a time raise up men to great power and glory, and make cities and countries to flowrish, yet ere all be done, it will lay them as low; yea, make them more desolate then is imaginable; so did *Assyria* and *Nineveh* feele; when *flocks lay down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the Nations*; when *the Cormorant and Bittern did lodge in the upper lintels of it, &c.* And no wonder, for these creatures were no more monstrous in mens account, then the former inhabitants were in Gods sight.

Vers. 15. *This is the rejoycing City that dwelt carelesly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her, shal hiss and wag his hand.*

The equity of this sentence upon that City, is confirmed from the causes thereof; where not recounting her particular sins, he takes notice of the result of all her sins, and the common sink into which they all ran; to wit, her security and insolency, that being blinded with the splendor of her prosperity, she despised all other Nations, and cast off all fear of any change; because of which it was righteous with God, by laying her so desolate to make her an ignominious spectacle to all beholders. Doct. 1. It is not possible for wicked men to guide their prosperity and successe in ill courses well, but they will swell in pride thereby, and so provoke God yet more to anger against them: for, *This is the rejoycing City that dwelt carelesly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me.* 2. Look how much wicked men prof-

prospering in sin, have been admired by others or have admired themselves for their prosperity, divine indignation shall indue time make them as remarkable for ignominious calamity; for, *How is the rejoycing City become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in, every one that passeth by her, shall hisse and wag his hand.*

## CHAP. III.

After these threatnings denounced against other nations, the Lord returns to speak to the Church, & threatens *Jerusalem* for the many iniquities done in her, *v.*1,2. particularly for the sins of Rulers in State, *v.* 3. and of Church-guides, *v.* 4. and confirmeth the equity of this sentence from Gods justice and their incorrigibleness, either by the Word, *v*, 5. or by the rod, *v.*6,7. And because the godly could not but be affrighted by these threatnings, therefore he subjoyns many comforts to them, concerning the returning of their captivity, and the mercies of the Gospel; exhorting them to wait on God, in expectation that he who punished the Church, would appear and punish her enemies, *v.* 8. at which time he would propagate true Religion, and make Jews and Gentiles jointly serve him, *v.* 9. would gather his people from the remotest parts of the world, *v.* 10. would endue them with excellent qualifications, and give them safety, *v.* 11, 12, 13. and would furnish them with ample matter of joy, *v.* 14, 15. and of serving God without fear, *v.* 16. considering his power and love, *v.* 17. and what he will do for recovering their broken and desperate estate, *v.* 18. 19. 20.

Vers. 1. *WO to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing City.*

2. *She obeyed not the voice: she received not correction: she trusted not in the* LORD: *she drew not neare to her God.*

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The Lord having by his Prophet, uſed all the former meanes for reclaiming his people, but in vain; he comes now to pronounce his laſt ſentence againſt the body of that nation, and threarens *Jeruſalem* with a wo; the general cauſes whereof were her pollution, through oppreſſion and violence, and her contempt of warnings from the Word, her not being bettered by corrections, her not truſting in God, but in other things, and her not entertaining communion with him, who offered himſelf to her in the Covenant. *Doct.* 1. As Gods anger declared againſt a people, portends miſery enough to them, though there were no other evidences of it; ſo he will not ſpare nor exempt his own people, when they provoke him: eſpecially ſuch as being moſt obliged to him, yet do prove eminent in defection; therefore as he threatens other Nations, ſo alſo his own ſinful people, and names *Jeruſalem* for all, becauſe ſhe was chiefe in the defection, who ſhould have been holy, and a Sanctuary to God; and under this *wo* comprehends all the evils which afterward purſued that people. 2. Injuſtice and oppreſſion is an abominable and filthy ſin, eſpecially in the Church; and the riches gathered that way, do not give any ſplendor, but make men and places vile in Gods ſight, and obnoxious to his curſe; for, *the oppreſſing City is filthy and polluted*, as the crop or gorge of a ravenous bird, where all unclean things are heaped together; or as one made a publick ſpectacle of infamie, as the word imports, and therefore *wo to her.* 3. As diſobedience unto the Lord, revealing his mind by his word, is ground ſufficient for a quarrel; and as contempt of the authority of God in his word, is the cauſe of mens boldneſſe in ſinne: ſo it will be a great aggravation againſt ſinners, that warnings from the Word do not reclaim them: for, *Wo to her that is filthy, ſhe obeyed not the voice.* 4. As rods ſent upon the Church, will either make her better, by inſtructing and humbling her under Gods hand, or ripen her yet more for Gods wo: ſo obſtinacy in ſinne under corrections, is a ſad aggravation thereof: for, *Wo to her that is filthy, ſhe received not correction*, or inſtruction by her correction, as the word imports. 5. God is ſo willing to be the ſtay and confidence of his people, that it is a quarrel when they will not lean all their weight on him: and as want of faith in God drives men to ſinful and wrong courſes, ſo this is a great iniquity before him: for, *Wo to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppreſſing City, ſhe truſted not in the Lord*: and this alſo is the cauſe why the word or rod works ſo little. 6. As the neglect

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of keeping communion with God, turneth the heart loose to all sinful wayes and snares; so the cause of little dependance on God in straits, is, because men cannot be at paines to keep neer God, that so they may reap the fruit of faith; for, *Wo to her that is filthy, she drew not neer to God, and she trusted not in the Lord*, because she could not take paines *to draw neere to God*. 7. The Lords gracious condescendence and offering of himself to the visible Church, to be approached unto in all cases, and her profession of having an interest in him, doth aggravate her fault in not making use of him, nor taking hold of such an advantage; for it is an addition to her sin, that *she drew not neer to her God*; that is, to God who was hers in offer and visible covenant, and in whom she gloried as hers.

Ver. 3. *Her Princes within her are roaring lions: her Judges are evening wolves, they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.*

The Lord denounceth this wo upon *Jerusalem* more especially; for the sins of her State-Rulers, her Princes and superiour Magistrates, who ought to have been for the praise of well-doers, & a comfort, and Protectors to the Subjects, were a terrour, & cruel as lions, and that not against enemies, but Subjects in the midst of the City: and her Judges or inferiour Magistrates were no better then they, but as cruel and unsatiably greedy as hungry wolves, who coming out in the evening, (having fasted all day) do not only eat the flesh of their prey, but so do gnaw the very bones, as they leave nothing till the morrow. See *Prov.* 28.15. *Doct.* 1. As a land doth not ordinarily degenerate, but when Magistrates of all ranks are also corrupt: so the sins of Rulers have an especial hand in drawing judgements on a land; for *when the city is filthy and polluted, &c.* v. 1. then *Princes and Judges are lions and wolves*; and because of this, *wo* is denounced. 2. It is a great iniquity and abuse of Gods Ordinance of Magistracy, when the hearts of men in power are lifted up above their brethren, and when they employ all their power for their own ends, and against those for whose good they should employ it; this was the sin of Princes and Judges: *They are roaring lions within her, and evening wolves.* 3. It is a judgement, and a presage of ruine to come on a land, when their Rulers are not men hating covetousnesse; but hungry, greedy men are entrusted

truſted with affairs, whereby they who in their private ſtations could not poorly bite and oppreſſe, are enabled by their power and place to play the lion and wolfe: ſuch was *Judahs* caſe; *Her Judges were evening wolves, they gnaw not the bones till the morrow*, or, *they leave not the bones to be gnawed*; or *continue not to gnaw the bones till the morrow*, but preſently devoure up all.

Ver. 4. *Her Prophets are light and treacherous perſons: her Prieſts have polluted the Sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.*

The Lord ſubjoynes the ſins of Church-officers, as a further cauſe of this judgement, and chargeth their falſe Prophets, who pretended to an extraordinary calling, with prophaneeſs and levity in their carriage, and inconſtancy in their doctrine, fitting it to all humours and parties, which was great perfidiouſneſſe, and their Prieſts or ordinary Miniſters, with prophaning the Sanctuary and holy things, in miniſtring unto the Lord, and with perverting the true ſenſe of the law in their ordinary doctrine, and teaching of the people: *Doct.* 1. When God reckons with a land for ſin, it is no ſtrange thing to ſee them who ſhould be meanes of reclaiming people, that they may flee from the wrath to come, acceſſory to the guilt of the land, and partakers in the judgement; for both Prophets and Prieſts are here found guilty; See *Lam.* 2. 14. 2. Want of gravity in carriage, and raſhneſſe, and inconſtancy in doctrine, making the Word *Yea* and *Nay*, and fitting doctrine to all humours, parties and times, is a character of a falſe Miniſter, acceſſory to a lands ſin, and liable to ſad judgements, whatever extraordinary or ſingular thing he pretend to; *Her Prophets are light*, (or *raſh, unſtable and heady*) *perſons.* 3. An unfaithful time-ſerving Miniſter, though he may pleaſe himſelfe and others, may like well of his way, yet in Gods account he is but a perfidious man, betraying his truſt, and the ſoules of men, and men will finde it ſo in due time; for being *light*, they are alſo *treacherous perſons.* 4. Every Miniſter that would approve himſelfe to God, ought to give himſelf, both to deal with God in behalfe of the people, and with the people on Gods behalfe; for, ſuch was the Prieſts charge to miniſter unto the Lord in

*the Sanctuary*, in name of the people, and to be ordinary teachers of *the law* to the people, in both which they failed here. 5. It is a token of ſins full ripeneſſe, and of ſpeedy approaching judgement, when Miniſters dare pollute the holy things of God, by going prophanely and in a carnal way about his worſhip and ſervice; (their own familiarity and frequent employment about it, without ſenſible hearts, having bred a contempt of it) and ſo embolden others to do the like, or tempt them to abhor Gods ſervice: thus was it with *Jeruſalem*, when wo came upon her; *Her Prieſts have polluted the Sanctuary.* 6. The holy Scripture being the reveaſed will of the ſupreame Lord, and the unalterable rule of mens duty, according to which they may expect bleſſings or curſes, it muſt be an high preſumption in men, to wreſt and force it to applaud their fancies, and to take their light to the Word, and father it upon it, and not come with ſubmiſſion of heart to receive light from it; and ſo make of Scripture what they pleaſe: this is alſo a quarrel, *They have done violence to the Law.*

Ver. 5. *The juſt Lord is in the midſt thereof: he will not do iniquity, every morning doth he bring his judgement to light, he faileth not: but the unjuſt knoweth no ſhame.*

The equity of this threatned *wo* is cleared from the juſtice of God, who not only dwelling amongſt them, could not without imputation to his holineſſe, paſſe over ſuch groſſe abominations, but alſo was a juſt God in giving her faire play in this proceſſe, and not pronouncing this ſentence till ſhe was found incorrigible: which he proveth from two evidences, whereof the firſt is, that however he had daily and early by his Meſſengers held forth this law, as a lamp whereby they might ſee the evil of their wayes; and ſo failed not to give them warning that they might be reclaimed; yet they proved obſtinate, and impudently bluſhed not to ſin againſt cleare light. *Doct.* 1. However a viſible Church perſevering in ſin, may bleſſe her ſelfe and expect great things from Gods viſible preſence with her; yet all theſe priviledges ſpeak the impenitent ſinners diſadvantage, & their lying neer a ſtroak; for, if *the juſt Lord be in the midſt thereof, he will doe no iniquity*, to wit, in ſparing her being ſo ſinful. See *Amos* 3.2,3. 2. God doth ſo much delight in mercy,

cy, and is ſo tender of his people, that he never proceeds to ſeverity, ſo long as there is another way uneſſayed to reclaim them, or to ſtint the courſe of their ſin; which doth abundantly juſtify him when he judgeth; for, in this alſo he is *the juſt Lord in the midſt thereof, he will not do iniquity*, in that he will not caſt off till other means be eſſayed, as the following purpoſe cleareth. 3. It is a great favour from the Lord, and a teſtimony of his long-ſuffering, when he doth not take every ſinner at his firſt word, but followeth him with frequent warnings of his danger if he go on; and offers of advantage if he returne; for, it is marked here as an evidence of Gods kindneſſe in this proceſſe, that *every morning*, (which was the uſual time of Prophets preaching, *Jer.* 7. 25.) *doth he bring his judgements to light, he faileth not.* 4. Albeit men may pretend to acknowledge the authority of God and his Word; yet it is uſual, that when they are mad on ſin, and going to ruine, this ſhould be a preſage of it, that the Word will do nothing at them; for it is marked as their ſin, and a token that judgement muſt come on, when notwithſtanding warnings; *the unjuſt knoweth no ſhame.* 5. None who are within the viſible Church, and doe acknowledge a Deity, and yet dare with a high hand ſin againſt the cleer light of the Word, but they proclaim themſelves to be deſtitute of all ingenuity, and given up to the plague of effronted impudence, for, ſuch *know no ſhame.*

Ver. 6. *I have cut off the Nations: their towers are deſolate: I made their ſtreets waſte, that none paſſeth by: their cities are deſtroy'd: ſo that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.*

*7. I ſaid, Surely thou wilt feare me: thou wilt receive inſtruction, ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut off, howſoever I puniſhed them: but they roſe early, and corrupted all their doings.*

A ſecond evidence of their incorrigibleneſſe is, that the Lord had often-times viſited the Nations round about; not one, but many of them, and not with an ordinary, but with remarkable ſtroakes, deſtroying their ſtrong holds, or Princes, (which as corner ſtones, as the word imports, uphold the fabrick of the Commonwealth) and making ſuch havocke of the Nations as there were neither traveller nor Inhabitant to be found:

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all which, conſidering outward meanes, and their duty, might have warned them to flee thoſe ſinnes, for which thoſe Nations had been puniſhed, and inſtructed them to fear God, and reforme their wayes, that ſo their afflictions might have kept within bounds of fatherly correction, and they might have prevented the laſt ſtroake of being put out of their land: and yet for all this, they were ſo farre from turning to God, that they were even worſe, all their wayes being not only ſinful, but corrupt, and bent, active, and headlong in going wrong, as if it had been their ſtudy: and they were as earneſt to goe wrong, as he had been to reclaim them, *v.* 5. *Doct.* 1. The Church is ſo dear unto God, and he ſo tender of her well-being, that before he ruine her, he will preach her duty, and danger to her, upon the dear expence of others; for all theſe ſad judgements on others, *v.* 6. was to inform her, that ſhe might prevent the like. 2. Judgements inflicted on any of the world, is a document, and call to others to fear God, eſpecially being guilty of the like ſinnes, yea, even the Church ought to take warning from judgements on enemies; for, *He cut off thir Nations, laid their Towers deſolate, &c.* that his Church might *feare him*, and *receive inſtruction.* 3. Albeit God onely wiſe, to whom all his works are known from the beginning, cannot be diſappointed of any expectation he hath; yet this dealing with his ſinfull people, and the meanes he uſeth, are ſuch as in reaſon might promiſe, and doe indeed oblige them to bring forth the fruits of repentance, and reformation; therefore he ſubjoynes to this warning, from his judgements on others, *I ſaid, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive inſtruction*; ſpeaking after the manner of men, and ſhewing what his dealing did oblige to. 4. True godlineſſe, and an evidence of true turning from Apoſtaſie, conſiſts in an holy aw of God, and fear becauſe of our offending him, or to offend him again, joyned with ſpiritual wiſdom, learned from the word, and from our experience of our ſelves, and our failings, or of others, to carry on and feed that diſpoſition; for ſo is their duty here deſcribed, *Thou wilt feare me, thou wilt receive inſtruction.* 5. No ſtroakes on ſinners ought to be a diſcouragement to them, being penitent, from comming to God, or from expecting good at his hand, for if they ſhould *fear him, ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut off, howſoever he puniſhed them.* 6. Albeit true godlineſſe, or turning

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to God from ſinful wayes, will not exempt a people from fatherly chaſtiſements to make them more wiſe, and their turning yet more ſerious; yet the penitent in theſe will meet with favour, conſidering what he deſerves, and what ſuch as go on in impenitency meet with; for ſo is inſinuated, *ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut off, howſoever I puniſhed them.* 7. To be delivered from going into captivity, out of our own land, where we ſhould want the publick ordinances of Gods worſhip, is a mercy which may ſweeten much affliction in our own land; it is a promiſe to the penitent, *Their dwelling ſhall not be cut off, howſoever I puniſhed them.* 8. Such is the madneſſe of men, eſpecially where the Lord hath given them over, that no example will warn them; their ſecurity, conceit, dreaming of priviledges, &c. will hide all dangers from ſuch, till they light upon themſelves; for all theſe warnings wrought not, *they corrupted all their doings.* 9. The more meanes be eſſayed to reclaim a people, without ſucceſſe, the worſe will that people grow; where meanes are not bleſſed, they leave that curſe behinde them; therefore all theſe meanes of warnings, threatnings, promiſes, and leſſer ſtroakes being in vaine, ſee what followeth, *They roſe up early, and corrupted all their doings*, they were vigilant, active, and earneſt to goe wrong. 10. It is a cleare proofe of incorrigibleneſſe, and a preſage of certaine ruine, when a people are never more mad upon ſinne, then when judgements are let forth for it; for by this the Lord proves their incorrigibleneſſe, and ſealeth this wo upon them, that when the Nations were cut off, yet *They roſe up early, and corrupted all their doings.*

Ver. 8. *Therefore wait ye upon me, ſaith the Lord; untll the day that I riſe up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the Nations, that I may aſſemble the Kingdomes, to poure upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of my jealouſie.*

The Lord having thus accuſed, and left the body of the Jewes under his wo, he turnes now to the godly among them, who could not but be affrighted with theſe threatnings, and trou-

troubled with the thoughts of diſperſion of the people; therefore he propounds divers grounds of their encouragement, ſome whereof were to be accompliſhed in part, at their return from the captivity, and all of them ſpiritually, in the dayes of the Meſſiah, beſide what may be expected yet more fully at the converſion and ſaving of all Iſrael.

The firſt ground of encouragement is, that as they had God to wait and depend upon in the time of the enſuing calamity, wherein God would conſume the Jewes out of his jealouſie over them; ſo there was ground of hope, that the Lord having puniſhed his Church would appear againſt her enemies, to take the prey out of their teeth, and raiſe up the Nations to conſume them, and make ſuch havoke of them, as might teſtifie his zeal for his people, and glory, which had been violated by them; and therefore the godly were patiently to expect this day, ſo much the rather as all this ſhould tend to the advancement of the Kingdome of Chriſt, as is after cleared. *Doct.* 1. The Lords juſt controverſie againſt the viſible Church, provoking him to abandon her, doth nothing diminiſh his affection to any godly remnant in it, nor make him forget them in ſad times: for in the midſt of all theſe quarrels, he hath a word to them: 2. God in his Church, is jealous of her, and of her affection toward him, and for his Church againſt all that trouble her; in both which caſes, his jealouſie being provoked, is terrible, and will raiſe up many inſtruments, and make a great deſtruction; for this *jealouſie* of God, firſt againſt the Jewes (which is ſuppoſed here, and firſt in order to be underſtood) and then againſt her enemies (which is moſt expreſly pointed at) will *ariſe to the prey* as a roaring Lyon, will *aſſemble Nations and Kingdomes*, to make them ſcourges to the Jews, and then to be plagued themſelves, *Will pour out indignation, and fierce anger*, and *devour all the earth or Land*. 3. When the Lord is about to bring forth ſome glorious peece of his Goſpel-work, The Church is to expect ſome great ſhakings, and vaſtations to make way for it; for in order to what followeth in this Chapter, there will be *a devouring of all the earth*, a caſting of all into the furnace, that he may bring out his pure mettal: 4. When it pleaſeth the Lord to let judgements upon his Church ariſe to a captivity, and a leaving of them in their enemies hand, the godly are to expect a time of the trial of faith, and patience, before there be a change; as here is inſinuated, that when *Judah* is

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conſumed, there will be need of *waiting on God*, before a day of vengeance on enemies come about. 5. Times of greateſt trouble, have matter of encouragement to the godly, in that they have ground of preſent dependance on God for ſtrength and furniture, during the ſtraite: and ground of future hope, that there will be an outgate, and that vengeance will come on oppreſſors: they are allowed and invited to *wait on God*, till that other day come. 6. Patience is the kindly fruit of hope, and the poſture wherein the godly are to expect iſſue, and to finde preſent troubles eaſie, *Wait ye upon me, ſaith the Lord, till the day, &c.*

Ver. 9. *For then will I turne to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent.*

10. *From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, thy ſuppliants, even the daughter of my diſperſed, ſhall bring mine offering.*

A ſecond ground of encouragement is, that theſe calamities on the Jewes and their enemies, ſhould not make the Church to ceaſe; but God ſhould propagate pure Doctrine, pure Worſhip, and profeſſion unto many people, both Jewes and Gentiles; who ſhould joyntly concurre to ſerve him, and help one another in his obedience, *v.* 9. Thus a *pure language* ſeemes to be underſtood, as *Iſa.* 19. 18. not ſecluding purity of heart, amongſt ſome of them, which it evidenced by purity of language, as may appeare from *Iſa.* 6. 5. *Matth.* 12. 34. *Jam.* 3. 2. and from what is further promiſed here; yea, the Lord promiſeth that he will gather them from the furtheſt parts of the world, to ſeek him, and offer ſervice to him, *v.* 10. This promiſe is accompliſhed, partly in his gathering together in Chriſt, his diſperſed elect throughout the world, and remoteſt corners thereof, *Joh.* 11. 52. and theſe Ethiopians, or, (as ſome conceive) Egyptians, among the reſt; and partly it ſhall be accompliſhed when the Lord ſhall call ſcattered *Iſrael* from the remoteſt parts of the world to ſerve him, and they ſhall bring in ſome Gentiles with them, as a gift to God. *Doct.* 1. It is matter of praiſe to God, and of encourage-

ment to the godly, that go with Nations as it will, yet he is not to want a Church, though he ſhould gather it from among Pagan Gentiles, and ſuch as there is little apparent hope of; for when *the earth is devoured*, v. 8. then he will get *many people*, as the word is, and that *from beyond the rivers of* Ethiopia. 2. Purity of Doctrine, worſhip and profeſſion, is the glory of a Goſpel-Church, and a glorious work of God to make it ſo, and keep it ſo; for, ſaith the Lord, *I will turne to the people a pure language*, or, pure Doctrine and profeſſion, inſtead of their Idolatrous and blaſphemous fancies, and their way following thereupon. 3. Purity of Doctrine, worſhip and profeſſion, doth not conſiſt in a lawleſſe liberty, or toleration, to think or ſay what men will, but is conjoyned with, and carried on by an united uniformity, which as it is the rich fruit & recompence of much trouble, ſo it is to be expected in the Lords time and meaſure: for, when after their much trouble they ſhall have *a pure language*, they *will ſerve him with one conſent*, or *ſhoulder*, even in that *pure language*, See *Jer.* 32. 39. *Zach.* 14. 9. 4. As unanimity in the matters of God, and the free acceſſe of Jew and Gentile to ſerve God, the one as well as the other, is a great mercy of the Kingdome of Chriſt: ſo when ſeekers of God are of one heart, and do all put hand to the work to help one another, without obſtructing, or lying by, it is a token of thriving ſervice: this is alſo included in the promiſe, as a great bleſſing, and a meanes of much good, *They ſhall ſerve him with one conſent.* 5. The true characters of a converted and ſpiritual people, are their being much in calling on God, imploying and making uſe of him in all things, and their giving up themſelves to be his ſervants at his diſpoſal; and in teſtimony of their ſubjection, and thankfulneſſe, they will put hand to his work, as they are called, will do all as ſervice to him, and bring their worſhip, themſelves, or others, as they are able to offer up to him: thus are they here deſcribed, *They all call on the name of the Lord*, when they get the pure language, they are *ſuppliants*, they *ſerve him*, and *bring his offering.* 6. As the Lord will not loſe any of his elect, how farre ſoever ſcattered through the world, and will recover his own, when their caſe ſpeakes them afarre off, and they are driven to exile, without hope or probability of returne, in their own apprehenſion; ſo in particular, the Lord will in due time ſeek after and recover his ancient people, now of a long time ſcattered, whereby there ſhall be a reviving of his ſervice in the world;

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for *from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*, he will ſeek *the daughter of his diſperſed*, and cauſe them to come, at which time there will be *ſuppliants* and *offerings* brought, and *ſerving of him with one conſent*.

**Ver. 11.** *In that day ſhalt thou not be aſhamed for all thy doings, wherein thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt me: for then I will take away out of the midſt of thee them that rejoyce in thy pride, and thou ſhalt no more be haughty becauſe of mine holy mountaine.*

A third ground of encouragement is, the promiſe of the Churches reconciliation with God, through the free pardon of ſinne, and her renovation; the glory whereof ſhould rub off the ſhame of her former iniquities, and ſhould be followed with ſuch felicity, as ſhould take away the ignominy of her former afflictions for ſinne, and particularly he promiſeth to purge away their conceit, and carnal gloriation in the Temple, and outward ceremonies, and to make worſhipping of God in ſpirit and truth to be only in requeſt; theſe promiſes are made to the Church, in reſpect of the elect in her, and do hold forth that eventually, at ſome times, and ſpecially at the converſion of *Iſrael*, there may be a more general renovation of Church-members; but do neither hold forth that they will be univerſally ſuch, nor yet do preſcribe that it is the Churches duty to admit none but ſuch. *Doct.* 1. Greateſt promiſes of outward things, will not afford matter of encouragement to the godly, unleſſe with theſe the work of reconciliation, and renovation be going on; therefore is this promiſed to encourage the godly Jewes. 2. Albeit the Lords reconciled people have cauſe to be aſhamed of themſelves, and to teſtifie their repentance, by bluſhing for their backſlidings, *Ezek.* 16. 61. yet being reconciled and turned to God, they may lift up their face through a Mediator, expecting not to be eternally confounded, and that God will not charge them with theſe ſinnes, but will bury them; and make their future converſation rub off that reproach, and by his doing for them, will take away the ignominious effects of their ſinne; ſo much doth this promiſe aſſure us, *In that day ſhalt thou not be aſha-*

*med for all thy doings, wherein thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt me.* 3. As men cannot prove their ſinne to be really pardoned, but by their renewed converſation; ſo without this there is no taking away of the ignominy of former ſinful wayes; thus doth the Lord prove that they ſhall be a pardoned people, and not aſhamed, *for then I will take away out of the midſt of thee, them that rejoyce in thy pride, &c.* 4. The ſhameful ſinne of the viſible Church, is her boaſting of externall priviledges, and being bold to ſinne, becauſe of them, her outward mercies of that kinde becomming her ſnare, and ſtanding betwixt her and the kernel of them; for this is the ſinne to be removed; *rejoycing in thy pride*, or, *excellency*, as the word ſignifieth, and *being haughty becauſe of my holy mountaine.* 5. As the Lord muſt be the worker of our reconciliation, and renovation, as his making a promiſe about it doth teach us; ſo when the Lord hath a miude to do good, and appear for a people, who have lain under great ignominy and judgements for ſinne, he can ſoone reforme them, and make them ſhine in holineſſe, as here he promiſeth to the Church of the Jewes, whoſe name to this day is a reproach, *Thou ſhalt not be aſhamed, I will take away them that rejoyce in thy pride &c.*

Verſ. 12. *I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and pure people: and they ſhall truſt in the Name of the Lord.*

13. *The remnant of Iſrael ſhall not doe iniquity, nor ſpeak lies; neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they ſhall feed and lye down, and none ſhall make them afraid.*

The ſanctification of the Church is further commended, that no affliction, paucity, nor poverty, (as when they returned from *Babylon*) ſhould obſtruct, but rather help it on; the Lord emptying them of all things by affliction, that they may learne to truſt in God, and ſtudy holineſſe and ſincerity, which are approved in his ſight; whereunto they ſhall be encouraged by Gods protecting of them, and keeping them,

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in ſafety from violence and feare, notwithſtanding their low eſtate. *Doct.* 1. When the Lord corrects his Church, he uſeth not to make a full end, but to leave ſome to get good by theſe afflictions, and the fruit of them from the Lord; *I will alſo leave*, ſaith the Lord, *the remnant of Iſrael.* 2. The Lord ſeeth it fit to exerciſe even a remnant of his people with many afflictions, after he hath by their deliverance taken away their reproach, that ſo they may be put yet to a more ſerious ſtudy of holineſſe; for, they are *afflicted, and a poor people*, that they may *truſt*, and *do no iniquity.* 3. As truſt in God is a chiefe part, and the root of true holineſſe; and as the afflicted may have yet ground of hope, and may riſe the more in confidence that trouble would lay him low, and that carnal confidences do faile: And as afflictions do not allow us to be diſcouraged, but to put us to truſting and immediate dependance, and do feed faith; ſo to truſt in God, is ordinarily mans laſt ſhift, which he will never eſſay till he be emptied of all things beſide, and led by God to this duty, who undertakes to work faith as well as to give the reward of it; all theſe are imported in this promiſe, as it is propounded, *I will leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people: and they ſhall truſt in the Name of the Lord*, and here their holineſſe begins. 4. Truſt in God will encourage and enable the believer to follow holineſſe and Gods way; And, albeit perfection be not attainable in this life, yet the beliver is to prove his integrity, by avoiding the dominion of ſinne, and hypocriſie, and diſſimulation; and to emplore God for attaining thereof: This is the ſumme of that promiſe, *The remnant of Iſrael ſhall not do iniquity, nor ſpeak lies: neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.* 5. As God is ſufficiently able to give ſafety and ſupport to his own in their weakeſt condition; and as the godly have the Covenant-right to temporal preſervation when it is good for them, and are alwayes hid in the ſecret of Gods preſence, and may attaine to peace and freedome from the ſlaviſh feare of trouble: ſo the faith, or ſenſible experience of this protection, is a ſufficient motive to Saints, to ſtudy holineſſe, and keep the way of God; This imported in the promiſe, *They ſhall feed* (as his flock) *and lye down, and none ſhall make them afraid*; and in its being ſubjoyned, as a reaſon why they ſhall ſtudy holineſſe; *They ſhall not do iniquity, &c. for they ſhall feed and lye down, &c.*

Ver. 14.

Ver. 14. *Sing, O daughter of Zion: ſhout O Iſrael, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jeruſalem.*

15. *The LORD hath taken away thy judgements, he hath caſt out thine enemy: the King of Iſrael,* even *the LORD* is *in the midſt of thee: thou ſhalt not ſee evil any more.*

The Lord ſubjoynes yet further encouragements to the godly, in two exhortations directed to the Church of the Goſpel, wherein yet more of her allowance, and priviledges are held forth. The firſt exhortation is to full joy, becauſe of Gods removing of plagues and enemies, becauſe of Gods preſence manifeſted in the midſt of her, and her freedome from former evils; importing a promiſe, that ſhe ſhould rejoyce becauſe of this, and that the godly of the preſent time might rejoyce in hope of it. *Doct.* 1. As the true Iſrael in ſpirit, children of *Zion*, and of that *Jeruſalem* which is from above, and who are heirs to all the promiſes, have allowance, and matter of compleat joy above any other ſociety, whoſe joy is ſtill embittered with ſorrow, and ought to entertaine their good condition with thankfulneſſe and rejoycing: So when *Iſrael* ſhall be converted, the Church may expect, that after their long ſilence, and bitter ſorrow, there will be a notable ſong among them; for, this exhortation, *Sing O daughter of Zion, ſhout Oh daughter of Iſrael, &c.* is a warrant and direction to all the godly, ſhewing how ſhort they often come; and promiſe to *Iſrael* in particular. 2. Though ſinne and ſpiritual judgements, together with outward calamities following thereupon, and enemies both outward and inward do oft times trouble the Church, yet in due time they ſhall not mar her mirth, but rather furniſh matter of a ſong, when God having quit the proceſſe againſt her, and healed her ſpiritual judgements and plagues, ſhall ſpeedily remove them, and her enemies; *Sing, &c.* ſaith he, *The Lord hath taken away thy judgements, he hath caſt out thine enemies:* whereby *judgements*, we are not only to underſtand her outward calamities, but all her ſpiritual plagues accom-

companying ſinne, and all the Lords ſad ſentences againſt her, which were the riſe of the enemies invaſion and ſucceſs. 3. It is matter of great joy, to have intereſt in the true God of the Church, who is the Lord *Jehovah*, alſufficient to make his followers happy, and maintain his and their rights, *Ezek.* 35. 10. eſpecially when the right is made clear to beleevers, and that the Lord is not to their ſenſe ſtanding afar off, but very neer and in the midſt of them; which every one that lives by faith may expect; for this is alſo matter of a ſong, *the King of* Iſrael, *even the Lord is in the midſt of thee.* 4. Albeit the Church cannot promiſe to her ſelfe, to be wholly and perpetually free from trouble, while ſhe is within time; yet *Iſrael* being converted, may expect not to meet with thoſe judgements they have endured ſince their rejection: and the godly may expect their own competent breathing times from trouble, & that trouble ſhall not hurt them, nor prove *evil* when it cometh, and that the day ſhall come, wherein they ſhall be for ever freed from it, which may ſweeten what they meet with, that it hinder not their joy; this is imported in that cauſe of the Song; *Thou ſhalt not ſee evil any more.*

Verſ. 16. *In that day it ſhall be ſaid to Ieruſalem,* Feare *thou not*; and *to Zion, Let not thy hand be ſlack.*

The ſecond exhortation (which the Lord promiſeth ſhall be directed to the Church, either by her Paſtors ſent out, or by way of acclimation from others, beholding her happy eſtate, particularly at their returne from *Babylon*; and at the converſion of all *Iſrael*) is, that by faith they would put away fainting feare, and ſtir up themſelves to ſerve God chearfully; for which end there are ſeveral encouragements ſubjoyned in the following purpoſe. *Doct.* 1. It is an uſual infirmity in the godly, that their diſpoſition comes far ſhort of their allowance; when they are allowed to *be glad and rejoyce with all the heart*, v. 14. they need to be ſtirred up nor to *feare* or *faint*. 2. The people of God are many times ſo miſtaken of their own caſe, that others may ſee more of their good condition then them-

themſelves, and they need the Miniſtery of the Word to direct their thoughts, to which they ought to ſubmit; for, *In that day it ſhall be ſaid to Jeruſalem, Feare thou not, &c.* 3. Faithleſſe fainting, feare and idleneſſe, are uſual companions, which feed and entertain one another; fear weakning the hands from dutie, & idleneſſe feeding diſcouragement yet more, therefore both are joyned here, *Fear not, let not thy hands be ſlack or faint.* 4. As the reconciled people of God have no cauſe of harmleſſe feare, if they would ſet themſelves againſt it; & as it becometh them to go about any duty enjoyned by God, with alacrity and chearfulneſſe; ſo our encouragements in God are then rightly uſed, when they ſtrengthen us to duty; ſo much alſo do theſe exhortations, being put together, import, *Feare not, let not thine hands be ſlack.* 5. As it is the duty of faithful Miniſters, ſo alſo it is the commendation of all the godly, to ſtir up one another to encouragement through faith, and to chearfulneſſe in the obedience of faith; for, they are commendably employed, who *ſay to Jeruſalem, Feare not, &c.*

Ver. 17. *The LORD thy God in the midſt of thee is mighty: he will ſave, he will rejoyce over thee with joy: he will reſt in his love, he will joy over thee with ſinging.*

The reaſon of the preceding exhortation, and the ground of their encouragement is taken from Gods Covenant made with them, and his preſence which was conſpicuous in the midſt of them; from which grounds they might expect not only that his power ſhould be employed for their deliverance, but alſo that out of his love, wherby he had choſen them, he would delight and acquieſce in them, and rejoyce over them, and do them good, and ſweetly cheriſh them, notwithſtanding what might be ſaid againſt them. *Doct.* 1. As the Lords Covenant with his Church, is not broken off by every diſcord or affliction; ſo the Lord manifeſting himſelf to be in Covenant with her, by his Ordinances, as ſignes of his preſence, ſaith much mercy to her, according as ſhe needs it, for the riſe of all the

the following encouragements, is, *the Lord thy God in the midst of thee.* 2. As the Church may expect freedome from all her troubles, either by prevention, support or deliverance; so her interest in God through the Covenant, makes his Omnipotency forth coming to her for that end, and she may reckon her strength by what is in him; for, *the Lord thy God is mighty*, and therefore, *he will save.* 3. Albeit the proofs of divine power, let forth for the Churches good, do set him out above all blessing and praise; yet his love-embracements are above all, and the chief of the Churches encouragements; therefore are they added as a further degree of comfort; *He will rejoyce over thee, &c.* 4. Albeit Christs Bride be of no worth to him, nor doth he need her, yet having chosen her to be his Bride, he will not come behinde in any duty, which such a relation promiseth or engaged to among men, but will take pleasure to be her God, will esteem, commend, cherish and delight in her, not according to her worth, but according to the dignity he hath called her unto, and as his wife, his love putting comelinesse upon her; & will expresse his delight by doing for her, as if her well-being were a sufficient recompence of all his pains; for, *He will rejoyce over thee with joy*, which points at his inward delight; *He will joy over thee with singing*, which noteth the outward expression of it; and both of them borrowed from the carriage of a Bridegroome to his bride, *Isaiah* 62. 5. 5. The Lords love doth so acquiesce in his people whom he hath chosen, as the end of his pursuit wherein he resteth, and doth not onely cherish them by many expressions of love, when he taketh up his rest in and with them; but answereth all objections that might be against them, with his own free love that hath chosen them; as reckoning, that having loved them, he will love them: and having let out his affection upon the unworthy, he will beare with their frailties, and not give a bil of divorce, nor chide continually: Thus *he will rest in his love*, or her whom he loveth, as having gained his end when he obtaines her; and in *his love* or affection to her, which is sufficient to make him not weary of her, nor reject her; yea as the word signifieth, *He will be dumb and deaf in his love*; His love (to speak after the manner of men) will guard his eare from hearing, and his mouth from uttering accusations against her, to wit, so as to cast her off, or denie her marriage-entertainment, though otherwise he may humble her.

Vers. 18. *I will gather them that are sorrowful*

for

*for the ſolemn Aſſembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.*

The Lord takes the word out of the encouragers mouthes, and himſelf applieth that more general promiſe, *v.* 7. to the broken and afflicted eſtate of the Jewes, for the encouragement of the godly remnant; promiſing that he would gather and bring them again to their own land, eſpecially thoſe, (or for their ſakes) who were mourners for the want of the ſolemne worſhip of God, as they had it in their own land, and burdened with the reproach following thereupon, *Pſal.* 137. *Doct:* 1. As it is the dutie of all the people of God, to finde God ſpeaking in and by his Word unto them; ſo is his mind to be found in his Word, and no where elſe; for he doth himſelf confirm what theſe exhorters had ſaid of him, *v.* 16. 17. for the further ſtrengthning of the godly; and what they ſaid of him from his Word, that for ſubſtance doth he ſay of himſelfe, when he ſpeaks, *I will gather, &c.* or employ my power and love to ſave, as *v.* 17. 2. The Lord ſpeaking by his word, will teach and allow his afflicted people, to apply general promiſes to their own caſe, as if they had been only intended for them; therefore doth he apply that general promiſe of manifeſting power and love to the particular ſtrait of their captivity; I *will gather, &c.* that is, I will employ my power and love to help thee in thy particular diſtreſſe. 3. As the Lords people do oft times provoke him juſtly to deprive them of publick Ordinances, and to ſcatter them into corners: ſo the want thereof will be a ſad affliction to ſenſible ſoules, as depriving them of the moſt lively repreſentation of heaven on earth, as obſcuring much of Gods glory which is ſeen and ſpoken of in the Sanctuary, and as ſecluding the godly from the mutual and comfortable fellowſhip one of another in his ordinances, and from much refreſhment and help which they had by thoſe meanes; for here they *are ſorrowful for the ſolemn Aſſembly*, wherein the Jewes uſed to go meet at the Temple to worſhip God. 4. Such is the inſolencie and cruelty of the Churches enemies, that the godly may not only look to be deprived of ſolemn Ordinances, where ſuch have power, but to have their burden and grief augmented, and to be in peril of being cruſhed with inſolent reproaching of their religion and worſhip; for here it is added to the former, *the reproach of it was a burden.* 5. When the Lord hath brought his

his people loweſt for their ſin, and enemies have got moſt of their will in cruſhing them, yet they are not without the reach of his help: he can, and in his appointed time will bring them out of all their captivities and troubles; for notwithſtanding all theſe afflictions, *I will gather them*, ſaith the Lord. 6. As it is the duty of the godly, in times of calamities to be moſt affected with what concerneth Gods honour, and ſeems to ſuffer prejudice: ſo ſuch do lie neareſt promiſes for the publick, or for themſelves either; for they that *are ſorrowful for the ſolemn aſſembly, are of thee*; that is, thy true and kindly children; and they get the firſt promiſe, *I will gather them*, and the Church for their ſake.

Ver. 19. *Behold at that time I will undoe all that afflict thee, and I will ſave her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praiſe and fame in every Land, where they have been put to ſhame.*

The Lord confirmeth this gracious promiſe of their return, and undertaketh to remove all impediments that might ariſe from themſelves or others, to hinder their gathering and reſtitution. As for outward oppoſition, he promiſes to ruine her oppreſſors; and for her ſelf, although by her affliction and captivity, ſhe were ſo broken and cruſhed like a disjoynted body, that ſhe was not able to move; yea ſo ſcattered as the torn members of a body caſt here and there into corners, that there is no probable hope of her gathering; yet he promiſeth not only to make a reſurrection from the dead, & to ſtrengthen her who halted, that ſhe may return, and to cauſe the driven out to be gathered; but that by ſo doing he will take away their reproach in view of all people, among whom they had lurked with ignominy. *Doct.* 1. There is ſo much which the afflicted Church may have in probability and to ſenſe to object againſt the truth of promiſes; that the performance of them will be wonderful, and to be admired; for here we are called to admire the Lords bringing about of his purpoſe, notwithſtanding ſo many ſeen impediments, *Behold, at that time, &c.* 2. The promiſes made to the Church ſpeak much wo to her oppoſers, and will come to effect over the belly of all oppoſition they can lay in the way; *I will undoe*

*undo all that afflict thee, and I will ſave, &c.* 3. The Lords people may be ſo cruſhed by their troubles, and diſabled, to doe any thing for themſelves or their own help, and ſo caſt out from all their enjoyments, and ſo ſcattered from the ſociety one of another, and from having the face of a people, that it may ſeem impoſſible to ſenſe, that they ſhall be recovered, although there were no enemies againſt them; for its a new impediment to their faith that they *halted*, which is a cruſh diſabling from any activity or motion, and were *driven out*. 4. They may be brought to a very low and deſperate condition by trouble, whom yet the Lord will not onely preſerve from ruine, but raiſe up (as it were) from the dead, and bring them to a full fruition of what he hath promiſed; *I will ſave her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out*, ſaith the Lord. 5. Albeit reproach be a great addition to trouble, yet the Lords people waiting on him, may expect to have it rubbed off with advantage, and that by his mercies toward them, he will make them honourable in the ſight of all thoſe who deſpiſed them, becauſe of their low eſtate; *I will get them praiſe, and fame in every Land, where they have been put to ſhame.*

Verſ. 20. *At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name, and a praiſe among all the people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, ſaith the* LORD.

The Lord yet inſiſts upon the former promiſe, and becauſe it was hard to beleeve ſo great a change, being as a reſurrection from the dead after ſo many years burial, and (as it were) rotting in their graves; therefore he repeats, and by ſubſcribing his own name, confirmeth the promiſe of gathering and bringing them back, and of making them famous throughout the world, when he ſhould return their captivity viſibly, and to their own ſatisfaction. He mentions the turning back of *captivities* in the plural number (as it is in the Original) with relation to their being led captives at ſeveral times, as under *Manaſſeh*, 2 *Chron.* 33. 11. under *Jehojakim*, 2 *Chron.* 36. 6. under *Jehojachin*, 2 *Chro.* 35. 10. (with every one of whom ſome of the people ſuffered) and under *Zedekiah*; and with relation to their being ſcattered into ſeveral places in their captivity, frō which they were

to

to be returned as ſo many troups of captives; if not alſo to their long diſperſion ſince the Meſſiah came, as well as to the former in *Babylon*. *Doct.* 1. Greateſt difficulties in the way of performance of promiſes, ought not to cauſe the Church to doubt any thing of the certainty of them; therefore is the promiſe again & again inculcated upon theſe fainting Jewes, as a moſt certain truth whatever they had to the contrary whereupon to reject it: *At that time will I bring you again.* 2. One act of Gods power and love manifeſted for his people, doth but make way for another to perfect it: and when the Lord begins a work with them they may expect he will not leave it unperfected; ſo much doth the way of making this promiſe import, that when he gathers them in their exile, (as he did under *Zerubbabel* and *Ezra*,) he will not leave them, till he ſafely bring them back; *At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you.* 3. The Lords appearing for a people, and doing for them, is their greateſt honour before the world, conſidering what it ſpeaks of their intereſt in ſo great a God, what reſpect he carries to them in their low eſtate, and how glorious he will make them by doing for them; and the Lord will in due time do for his people, that he may put his honour on them; therefore, it is here ſubjoyned as a fruit of his work, and his end in working, *I will bring you again, for I will make you a name, and a praiſe among all the people of the earth, when I turne back your captivity.* 4. The infinite fulneſſe of God is ſufficiently able to anſwer all his peoples wants, & will not leave his work undone to their contentment, were their difficulties never ſo many; for, whereas they had been often led captives, and ſcattered into divers places, he promiſeth, *I will turne back your captivities, and do it before your eyes*, or to your full content and ſatisfaction. 5. The former proofs, which God hath given of his power, to give a being to what he ſaith in greateſt extremities, is a ſufficient ground for the Churches encouragement, to lean to his promiſes in new difficulties: therefore to confirme all he ſubſcribes his name *Jehovah*, by which he had been known in their deliverance from *Egypt*, *Exod.* 6.3. as a ſufficient ground for their faith in this ſecond captivity: *I will turne back your captivity ſaith the Lord*, or *Jehovah. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.* Rom. 11.36.

FINIS.

# Mr. *Hutcheson's* Exposition on the three last Prophets.